DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 334 048 RC 018 252

TITLE	Operation of the Educational Laboratory for the Appalachian Region, 1986-90. AEL Final Report.
INSTITUTION	Appalachia Educational Lab., Charleston, W. Va.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	30 Nov 90
CONTRACT	400-86-0001
NOTE	192p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC08 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Information Services; Inservice Teacher Education; *Organizational Effectiveness; Organizational Objectives; Program Evaluation; Publications; *Regional Laboratories; *Research and Development; *Research Utilization; Rural Schools; School Policy; Small Schools; *Technical Assistance
IDENTIFIERS	*Appalachia Educational Laboratory WV

ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of the Regional Educational Laboratory operated by the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) during 1986-1990. AEL staff works with educators in ongoing research and development-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Part I of the report provides a systematic summary of the Regional Lab's intended and actual outcomes at two different levels. Section A deals with institution-level matters, and Section B deals with project-level matters. Projects conducted by AEL include: (1) the Regional Liaison Center; (2) the Classroom Instruction Program; (3) the School Governance and Administration Program; (4) the Policy and Planning Center; (5) the Professional Preparation and Research Program; (6) the School Services Center; and (7) the Rural, Small Schools Program. Part II presents a series of statements relevant to accomplishments, collaboration, and insights about successful practices and barriers to success. Part III provides graphic depictions that summarize some of the most salient features of the Lab's performance during the five-year period and provides a complete listing of the deliverables and other tangible products submitted by the Lab under its 1986-90 contract. Part IV reports only the fifth and final year of AEL's performance. (KS)

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AEL FINAL REPORT:

OPERATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY FOR THE APPALACHIAN REGION, 1986-90

(Contract No. 400-86-0001)

Submitted to:

Grants and Contracts Service
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
U. S. Department of Education
7th and D Streets, S. W.
Washington, D. C. 20202

Submitted by:

Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
Post Office Box 1348
Charleston, West Virginia 25325
304/347-0400

November 30, 1990

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RC 018252

AEL

Improving Education Through Research and Development

November 29, 1990

Ms. LaVerne Reddick
U. S. Department of Education
Grants and Contracts Service/OM
7th and D Streets, S. W., Room 3660
Washington, D. C. 20202/4731

RE: FY 86-90 Final Report (Contract No. 400-86-0001)

Dear Ms. Reddick:

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc., is pleased to submit its final report for the operation in 1986-90 of the Regional Educational Laboratory serving Region 3.

The enclosed document, AEL Final Report: Operation of the Educational Laboratory for the Appalachian Region, 1986-90, is submitted to fulfill the requirement established in the above-referenced contract for a deliverable titled "Final Report." The document also meets the requirements specified in Barbara Lieb-Brilhart's technical direction memorandum of April 6, 1990. That is, the report contains the FY 90 annual report, including fourth-quarter activities; the final report for the five-year contract period; and the self-assessment report for FY 90.

Barbara Lieb-Brilhart's technical direction memorandum requested that we also provide the final report on diskette. Therefore, four diskettes are enclosed (two Word Perfect 5.1 disks and two Macintosh disks).

This final report has been reviewed and approved for submission by AEL's institutional liaison, Dr. Richard Lallmang. A copy of this letter and four copies of the document are being sent under separate cover to Dr. Lallmang.

If you require further information about the enclosed document or about AEL's full compliance in meeting the requirements for the final report, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

John R. Sanders

John R. Sanders
Deputy Executive Director

Enclosures

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Fax Number (304) 347-0487 • A nonprofit corporation • An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

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Charleston, West Virginia 25325
304/347-0400

November 30, 1990

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL), Inc., works with educators in ongoing R & D-based efforts to improve education and educational opportunity. AEL serves as the Regional Educational Laboratory for Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. It also operates the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. AEL works to improve:

- professional quality,
- curriculum and instruction,
- community support, and
- opportunity for access to quality education by all children.

Information about AEL projects, programs, and services is available by writing or calling AEL, Post Office Box 1348, Charleston, West Virginia 25325; 800/624-9120 (outside WV), 800/344-6646 (in WV), and 347-0400 (local); 304/347-0487 (FAX number).

This publication is based on work sponsored wholly or in part by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education, under contract number 400-86-0001. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of OERI, the Department, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

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PREFACE

Even before the first Regional Educational Laboratory was funded under ESEA of 1965, students of education and social change were debating what a Regional Lab should be. Since then, all serious attempts to define Regional Labs have resulted in statements that reflect more of the unique character of each separate organization than a common set of definitional elements.

We at AEL have come to believe that the primary reason for each Lab's uniqueness is the unique character of the multistate region each serves. This explanation squares well with data derived from the almost endless external and internal reviews these organizations have endured over their quarter-century existence. We have also become convinced that a part of these organizations' character is that they, as a group, represent a very unusual kind of entity. Each is governed by a board of directors whose members are drawn from a multistate geographical region that does not coincide with other geopolitical boundaries. Yet, although controlled regionally, each Regional Laboratory's operation is fully funded by the U. S. Congress. This unusual circumstance, we believe, has contributed not only to the strength of the individual organizations, but also to the long-term stability of the national network of Regional Laboratories.

Why is this brief perspective on Regional Laboratories in general an appropriate preface to one Regional Lab's final report of performance for a five-year contract? Because the AEL Regional Laboratory, like its counterparts across the nation, represents more than a mere government contractor carrying out agreed-upon work. Becoming and remaining an operational Regional Laboratory is more complex than writing a winning proposal and providing the personnel and material resources required to carry out a contracted scope of work. Being a Regional Laboratory, in our experience, means becoming an integral part of the Region and yet resisting parochialism through active participation in the national Lab network.

Two important factors may not be directly recorded in a Regional Lab's contract but nevertheless shape its work, its particular organizational history, and its role within a national network of Regional Labs. Even when the impact of these factors is not explicit in this report, they must be kept in mind if the significance of what is reported here is to be fully understood and appreciated.

Finally, we would note that even our extensive quarterly reports and annual self-assessments provide far less than the complete picture of AEL's Regional Lab work. The act of condensing these extensive reports into a single final report requires data reduction of such magnitude that the most carefully crafted statements are, in some respects, so abstract that they may be seen as overgeneralizations. The necessity to condense five years of work into a summary document makes such abstraction unavoidable. The not inconsiderable limitation of a report such as this, therefore, is that it should be viewed as a secondary or tertiary source of information. Readers are encouraged to consult primary information sources for any but the most cursory view of what AEL undertook in 1986-90 and what we accomplished.

REPORT SUMMARY

In preparing this overview of the Regional Educational Laboratory operated by AEL during the past five years, we have explored the answers to three basic questions:

1. What did AEL set out to do through the Regional Lab during 1986-90?
2. What did the Regional Lab accomplish during this period?
3. What did we learn along the way?

This report attempts to share some of our more salient answers to these questions. To do this, it looks at the Lab's 1986-90 work from a variety of perspectives.

Part I of this report provides a systematic summary of the Regional Lab's intended and actual outcomes at two different levels. Section A deals with institution-level matters, and Section B deals with project-level matters. To the extent practical, therefore, we have attempted to reduce the redundancy of these two sections. Section A focuses primarily on organizational concerns relevant to Laboratory governance and management and to a lesser degree on matters of project operation. Section B focuses most heavily on concerns relevant to project operation and only minimally on matters of governance and management.

In Part II of this report, each of the three sections presents a series of statements relevant to accomplishments, collaboration, and insights about successful practices--and about barriers thereto. No attempt has been made in these sections to provide the kind of contextual information that characterizes Part I's more systematic treatment. Because of the very nature of the sections included in Part II, it is not possible to avoid completely overlap between the topics reported here and elsewhere in this document.

The information presented in Part III is of two distinctly different types. Section A provides graphic depictions that summarize some of the most salient features of the Lab's performance during the five-year period. Section B, on the other hand, provides a complete listing of the deliverables and other tangible products submitted by the Lab under its 1986-90 contract. These lists of deliverables/products are organized by type of product, rather than according to the project that produced them. Some of the documents cited here deal primarily with administration of the contract (e.g., quarterly and annual reports) and have not been widely disseminated. Other products cited have been widely disseminated by AEL and others with whom we collaborate.

Part IV reports on only the fifth and final year of AEL's performance. The information presented in the three sections of this part is of a very different character than that found in the preceding three parts of this final report. Within Part IV, the first and third sections provide information relevant to all of FY 90. Section B is different from the other two in that it reflects performance only during the fourth quarter of FY 90. Each of the three sections of this part includes both organization-level and project-level information.

PART I

OVERVIEW OF AEL'S REGIONAL LABORATORY, 1986-90

SECTION A: WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO AS A LAB AND WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED

This section of AEL's final report focuses on the Regional Laboratory from an organization-level perspective. Here we explain the conceptual breakthrough that permitted AEL's plan for 1986-90 to promise both a high level of organizational integrity and a high level of practitioner involvement. We discuss how this new conception led to, and was in turn supported by, changes in the structures of the Lab's governance, management, and operations. We believe that the five year 1986-90 test of AEL's refined approach to performing the role of a Regional Laboratory has been demonstrated to be successful. Evidence of different aspects of this success is presented throughout the final report.

Background

Prior to 1978, AEL was organized and operated in a manner typical of R & D-producer organizations. Research information or development products most needed in the Region were identified, and appropriate R & D projects were implemented by AEL staff. School personnel and others from the Region were involved almost exclusively as "subjects of the research" or "users of the products" produced.

When NIE's strict adherence to "project purchase" was lifted in 1978, AEL began to shift some of its resources from R & D production to R & D-based school services. Between 1978 and 1985, the balance in resource allocation was slowly transformed by overt action of the AEL Board to achieve a 50/50 balance in resources for R & D and for services.

In early 1983, AEL's Board and key staff set out to examine every facet of the Lab's structures and operations as a means of establishing a firm database for developing plans for 1986-90. These actions were signaled officially in the spring of 1983 with creation of an ad hoc Board committee for Lab planning that met regularly from that time until the 1986-90 proposal was submitted. During this period, the Board's and staff's efforts were supplemented by external consultants employed for their specialized skills.

These long-term and in-depth examinations of the Lab provided an array of information about AEL's strengths and weaknesses. Coupled with extensive new needs assessment information and advice gained through a series of field-based meetings, plans for AEL's 1986-90 Regional Lab proposal represented many iterations of idea generation, testing, and refinement. What emerged from this process was the design of a very different kind of Regional Lab. It was built around most of the strengths that had been attributed to the Lab as it then existed. However, a number of unique approaches to overcoming weaknesses (those specifically identified at AEL and those of Labs more generally) were designed into AEL's plan for 1986-90.

In this section of the Lab's final report for 1986-90, we identify a number of the more seminal governance, management, and operational features incorporated in our plan and discuss, in retrospect, how the plan played out. Although not every aspect of our plan succeeded without some adjustment, we believe our overall efforts were remarkably successful. As a result, AEL's plan for 1991-95 incorporates almost every organizational design element of our 1986-90 plan.

The Centralization-Decentralization Dilemma

Throughout their history, Labs have been plagued by two problems that have appeared to have contradictory solutions. If a Lab were to perform quality R & D, it required a strong organization with a critical mass of staff possessing specialized skills. At the same time, if a Lab were to exert any real influence on education in its region, contacts with education practitioners had to be intensive and frequent. This apparent dilemma permeated the folklore about Labs because it had been characteristically viewed as an issue of centralization vs. decentralization. And of the initial 20 Labs created in 1966, none of those that chose to decentralize their organizational structures had survived. Therefore, conventional wisdom said that Labs must employ a highly centralized structure like that of traditional R & D producers if they were to achieve the kind of organizational integrity required to succeed. This view of the required structure for a Lab severely limited the possibilities for providing R & D-based service to educators of a Lab's region.

The fundamental change incorporated in AEL's Regional Lab design for 1986-90 was a reconceptualization that produced a novel solution to the problem. We discarded the "centralized vs. decentralized" organizational construct and set out to plan an organization where the necessary organizational integrity to maintain R & D competence would be achieved while providing for the greatest possible involvement of the Region's practitioners. Although an oversimplification, the solution we came up with was to view AEL's key employees as convenors of temporary groups made up of volunteer practitioners that would be organized to carry out the Lab's work. Some such groups would learn to train others in the latest R & D-based school improvement techniques. Some would undertake the design and conduct of applied research projects that are of direct relevance to their work. Still others would undertake the knowledge transformation tasks of systematic product development.

This new conception of how a Regional Lab might operate appeared to provide for the integrated central structure needed to support staff operations and, at the same time, provide for a highly decentralized project operation structure. After meeting every intellectual challenge we used to test its validity, this new conception of a Lab's design was approved by AEL's Board. It would serve as the primary basis for AEL's 1986-90 proposal, and each element of governance, management, and operation would be built to support and operationalize this new structure.

Governance

Our analyses of AEL's Board of Directors pointed to the great asset it provided by linking the Lab to key professional associations and state education agencies (SEAs) of the Region. If we were to implement the operational plan now conceived, this kind of linkage seemed imperative. Therefore, the Board structure proposed called for each state's Chief State School Officer to serve ex officio on the Board and for each of three key professional associations in each state to designate its representative to the AEL Board. Three Directors-at-Large were also named from each state to provide a more balanced perspective on governance matters, but the linkages with SEAs and key practitioner groups held promise for far more than governance. These ex officio and designated Board members would tie the Lab's actual operation to key field-based education entities.

During 1986-90, this linkage function proved to be indispensable in legitimizing ties between the Lab and key state agencies/professional groups. Not only did the Board representatives serve as formal liaisons between the groups they represented and AEL's project staff, but selected members of the state groups they represented performed a de facto role as adjunct staff of the Lab. They formed temporary work groups that were convened and directed by key AEL staff members in conjunction with the appropriate AEL Board representatives.

Another governance structure designed to support this effort was the Board advisory committee created for each project. AEL had formerly used ad hoc project advisory groups composed of national experts and outstanding regional educators. While these groups benefited our projects, they did not serve to inform the Board (and those represented on it) about AEL's project efforts; thus, the Board (and the key groups represented on it) sometimes lacked a feeling of ownership for the Lab's projects. By creating an advisory committee made up of Board members for each project, a new level of ownership was achieved. The Board advisory committees met at least quarterly (in conjunction with Board meetings), and their members were directly involved in planning new project activities, evaluating other project activities, and sharing information about the project's specific work in their states. This Board advisory committee structure contributed a great deal to our projects' success in 1986-90.

Except for the kinds of logistical problems that would be expected to accompany such a complex merger of governance and operation, the Lab's Board structure has worked extremely well in 1986-90. Probably the most serious concern we encountered was a product of the very high level of ownership felt for the temporary work groups that state organizations cosponsored with AEL projects. On at least one occasion, this pride of ownership was expressed as the particular organization's exclusive right to participation by its members. Such "buy in" to the Lab's work is commendable, but the exclusivity could not be permitted. Handling this issue forthrightly has resulted in no noticeable diminution of commitment from cosponsors.

Because its members represent a broad spectrum of education interest in each state, and because those selected for Board membership are closely tied to education in their states, AEL's Board has proven especially effective in analyzing needs data and using its findings to direct the Lab's work. The makeup of our governance structure also ensures that the Lab's projects are continuously informed by the Region's needs as they can only be known to those who actually participate in the education system. The Board members' project advisory committee role has been regularly used to assess the relevance of each project activity in terms of actual education needs. The project advisory committees, therefore, consistently recommended adjustments in particular project activities as the need for such alterations became apparent. In this way, the work of each AEL project was consistently tested, and changed if necessary to keep it on track with the realities of the Region's education system.

Management and Operations

The strengths and weaknesses of the Lab's management and operating structures were scrutinized as part of the process for planning for 1986-90. AEL's proposal provided succinct descriptions:

> Among the assets recognized were the well-developed and documented systems for fiscal, contractual, and personnel management. The collegial nature of staff interactions and the principle of vesting authority and responsibility at the lowest relevant level of staff were applauded. The productivity of the Lab's programs was seen as far above average; the staff exhibited a genuine commitment to helping improve education in the Region.
>
> Some weaknesses were also found. Consultants expressed concern that the Laboratory director's office was understaffed, that the director handled too much detail work, and that he served almost exclusively as the communications link between the Board and staff. While the R & D programs were seen as exceptionally productive, they were criticized for not being structured in such a manner that the Region's educators could be easily involved. Also, the sharp distinction drawn by placing R & D projects in one division and school services in another made integration of the staff's efforts difficult. (AEL Technical Proposal for a Regional Educational Laboratory to Operate in NIE's Region 3 for 1986-1990, pp. 39-40)

Just as the analyses of governance strengths and weaknesses dictated things to be retained and changed, these analyses led to similar decisions about the Lab's management and operations for 1986-90.

The Lab director's office was expanded by adding a deputy executive director to share in the organization's overall management. To retain the very successful "flat" organizational structure, however, some projects were assigned to the director and others to the deputy, rather than using a hierarchial arrangement.

A Management Team made up of the executive director, deputy executive director, business manager, and project directors was established to ensure high levels of communication and cooperation across projects throughout the Lab. Meetings of the Management Team provided all AEL's key managers the opportunity to share information about project needs and successes, to invite collaboration on specific activities, and to resolve both substantive issues and management concerns. This structure, which was introduced in 1986, has proven to be an especially important mechanism for ensuring the solidarity required to maintain a well-integrated organization.

The Lab's new concept of Lab operation led to creating programs oriented to specific role and/or interest groups, rather than to establishing distinct R & D programs and service programs. Each of these programs was designed to provide a special "place" in AEL for involving teachers, school administrators and local school board members, state-level policymakers, teacher educators, or those with special interest in urban or rural schools. Each program had the capability of undertaking a full range of R & D activities, primarily employing the process of convening temporary practitioner groups in the field to participate in the work. Through this process, AEL's project staff served as catalysts to stimulate ideas for new project activities, convenors of temporary groups to carry out these activities, and organizers to ensure appropriate follow-through on their projects' work. This operating structure of the Lab's projects and the three key functions--catalyze, convene, and follow-through--proved to be very successful. Not only did the Lab's projects involve a great many of the Region's people, but they produced a great many R & D-based school improvement products as well.

Only one of the Lab's 1986-90 projects was not of the special-audience variety described. The exception, called the School Services Center, was designed to serve all the other projects by providing information and evaluation services to support them and their colleagues in the field.

The Board's project advisory committee structure proved very successful, of course, in providing high levels of communication between key Lab staff and the Board.

The Lab's Mission and Goals for 1986-90

Among the outcomes of the 1983-85 planning effort implemented by AEL's Board of Directors and staff were the explication (a) of the Lab's mission for 1986-90 and (b) of four overarching goals intended to direct the work of all Lab projects.

Mission of AEL's Lab

The mission statement was adopted in 1985 by the Board of Directors. It captured the essence of our intended approach to serving as the Appalachian Region's Lab during the five-year period as follows:

> AEL's purpose is to work with the Region's educators in an ongoing R & D-based effort to improve education and educational opportunity.

This mission statement did not attempt to identify what substantive work was to be done. Rather, it set forth the principles that were to undergird AEL's approach to the work of a Regional Lab:

- staff were to collaborate as professional colleagues with our Region's educators,
- the work of the Lab was to respect both the knowledge of science (explicit) and the wisdom of practice (implied by collaboration with education practitioners), and
- the work was to focus both on improving education in general and on improving access for all students to quality education.

These undergirding principles defined the basic processes that AEL would employ as means of achieving both immediate improvement in education and longer term professional development for the Region's educators.

The Lab's 1986-90 projects were designed to operationalize its mission. Descriptions of project goals and accomplishments presented in the next section of this report demonstrate, we believe, that the projects did implement AEL's mission statement.

Overall Goals and Their Accomplishment

The overarching goals established by AEL's Board for 1986-90 defined the four major areas on which the Lab's projects were to focus their efforts. These goals committed the Lab to work toward:

- the improvement of professional quality in the Region,
- the improvement of curriculum and instruction in the Region's schools,

- the improvement of community support for education, and
- the improvement of opportunity for access to appropriate education by all children of the Region.

These four overarching goals were derived on the basis of careful analyses of extensive regional needs assessment data that AEL had accumulated during its nearly two decades of service as the Region's Educational Laboratory.

The overarching goals established for 1986-90 identified only broad, general areas where the Lab projects' work was to focus; so the context in which they were applied is especially important. Each Lab project was designed, operated, and assessed under the supervision of an advisory committee composed of AEL Board members. Detailed information available from past needs assessments, knowledge of the Lab's overarching goals, and these Board members' firsthand knowledge of current educational needs were all regularly incorporated in the decisionmaking about each AEL project.

As a means of concluding this section on organization-level accomplishments, we share three related anecdotal items.

In October 1990, U. S. Under Secretary of Education Ted Sanders addressed a group of Lab personnel and others hosted by AEL in Lexington, Kentucky. We were gathered there to learn about that state's unprecedented effort at education reform. In his address, Under Secretary Sanders spoke of his personal involvement with and support for the national network of Regional Labs. Sanders offered an important way of assessing the success of a Lab--that is, when officials of the next state facing comprehensive reform (like Kentucky's) pick up the phone and call the Regional Lab for assistance rather than calling a consulting firm.

Sanders' explication of this goal struck an especially responsive chord in many from AEL. Earlier as we had worked on AEL's Regional Lab proposal for 1986-90, the informal goal we shared was almost identical to the Under Secretary's statement. As we worked, we encouraged one another, saying, "Our real performance goal for AEL in 1986-90 is that whenever a practitioner in the Region faces a problem, he or she will think first of calling us for help." While this was not one of the goals formally explicated in AEL's proposal, its intent was manifest in many of our 1986-90 efforts.

We were encouraged also by an article in the November 1990 issue of NEA Today titled "Labs for Learning." The article extols the Labs generally and AEL particularly for the practical, R & D-based assistance they provide to teachers. The conclusion of the article reads as follows:

> 'They're our regional partner,' says VEA's Instruction and Professional Development Director Helen Rolfe. 'They provide training, do workshops on critical issues. They're exceedingly current.'

> 'And when someone calls to find out how to teach science using ants--something I don't have volumes on--I make heavy use of their resource library, and I encourage our members to do the same,' adds Rolfe.
>
> If you've got research questions, write or call your regional research lab. After all, your tax dollars should be working for you. (NEA Today, November 1990, p. 21)

We were especially gratified, as well, when OERI issued its report, Use of Educational Research and Development Resources by Public School Districts. This 1990 OERI publication showed that the Regional Lab is recognized by 90 percent of the Region's educators polled, the highest recognition rate found in OERI's study. Given our limited resources, perhaps we can be thankful that we have not reached the point where every practitioner calls when confronted by a problem. But we believe the achievement of recognition by nine of ten practitioners is a good start in that direction.

Possibly OERI's report provides the best single measure of AEL's 1986-90 accomplishments. It shows that we are achieving the kind of name recognition that would be required to achieve the goal envisioned for Labs by Under Secretary Sanders. And we think this high level of recognition was achieved as a direct result of how we organized and carried out the Lab's work in 1986-90.

SECTION B: SUMMARY OF AEL PROJECT GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As noted in the preceding section of this report, AEL chose to organize around its external audiences, rather than around conventional topics. This decision reflected the prior decision to work with and through existing organizations, particularly state education agencies and professional associations. It has proven to reflect the realities of communication. A topic like "early childhood education" means something very different to a school superintendent than to a classroom teacher, and it means something different to a Chief State School Officer than to a superintendent. That is, what is nominally the "same" information must be packaged and communicated very differently for different audiences, depending on the unique needs of each.

Accordingly, in the subsections that follow, we have summarized the functions and accomplishments of each AEL project under three headings: (1) audience and audience needs, (2) the key procedures employed by AEL to meet those needs, and (3) program accomplishments. That is, we have tried to convey a sense of the rationale for the program, how it works, and what it has achieved--in every case, giving only enough examples to illustrate the main points. (Later sections of this report cover many of these points more systematically.) We have also tried to reflect on what we have learned--what has been found to work well, what has worked less well, and, sometimes, what has not worked at all.

The order in which programs are discussed reflects their appearance in the contract. (Thus, even though much of our Region is rural, we begin with a description of a program for urban areas and conclude with one for rural areas.) In fact, the order of presentation is less of a problem than the necessity of discussing each program separately, which fails to capture fully the interactions among them. In most cases, that cannot be helped, and we hope that readers will at least get a reasonably clear sense of what each program does and why.

Regional Liaison Center

Rationale for the Project

The Regional Liaison Center (RLC) was created to reach underrepresented groups and communities in AEL's four-state Region. In practice, its primary audiences are (a) community-based Black groups in the Region's urban areas and (b) the Region's Black leadership as a whole, as represented by individuals active in civil rights groups, historically Black educational institutions, fraternities and sororities, and school districts with high percentages of minority students. The Region has other minority groups--principally Hispanics and Asian-Americans concentrated in urban areas of Virginia near Washington, D. C.--but urban Blacks substantially outnumber all the others.

An important secondary audience for RLC has been parents of children with handicaps or with learning disabilities.

The percentage of Blacks in the population of the AEL Region as a whole ranges from a low of about three percent in West Virginia to nearly 19 percent in Virginia, but these aggregate statistics mask considerable variation within each state and, even more strikingly, within school districts. For example, in several Virginia cities, Black students constitute half or more of the school population.

The importance of the local and Regionwide minority-group audiences targeted by RLC is that they can provide a channel of communications to both schools and parents. To improve the educational environment for minority children--both at home and at school--it is not enough to involve only individual parents. Minority parents have often perceived schools as unresponsive; school personnel have often perceived minority parents as irresponsible. If these perceptions are not to remain self-fulfilling prophecies, the involvement of trusted mediators is needed to promote parent-school dialogue.

With respect to improving education, the principal needs of low-income Black communities are (1) access to information, (2) organizational skills, (3) positive contacts with schools, and (4) experience in working with schools to get their needs met.

RLC attempts to address all of these needs but particularly the first three. Although RLC has sometimes joined in community contacts with schools, it has found that local groups must, almost by definition, acquire experience for themselves.

Children with physical handicaps and learning disabilities may, like minority children, be neglected by schools. Certainly their parents perceive this to be the case. The rationale for working closely with parents of such children is that these parents routinely make demands on schools that are expensive and frustrating for all parties involved. Small in numbers but capable of attracting considerable attention to their causes, parents of the disabled need an objective source of information on their legal rights, on model programs, and what the research literature says about best educational practices for children with similar disabilities.

Key Procedures Employed

To reach the regional Black community, RLC initially convened a two-day conference of 55 leaders, drawn mainly from civil rights groups, the faculties of historically Black institutions, and school districts with significant minority populations. (The latter individuals included both school personnel and some parents, selected mostly because of prior involvement in educational activities.) Those attending the conference (at least ten individuals from each state) assessed needs in their respective states and committed themselves to assist RLC in setting up state-level meetings. These state-level meetings, which were coordinated with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) meetings, in turn led to a series of local meetings within urban areas.

In three states—Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia--RLC limited its role to reinforcing existing leadership. In communities where relatively sophisticated minority leadership already existed (e.g., by virtue of prior work on civil rights issues), RLC provided informational materials, ERIC searches, and sometimes technical assistance on such matters as printing or newsletter preparation. In communities where little or no formal organization was apparent, RLC attempted to help ad hoc groups work through hostility toward willingness to participate more actively in educational programs. A typical meeting might begin with letting community members ventilate their frustrations, proceed by compiling a list of perceived problems, and conclude by helping parents turn negative complaints into statements of positive responsibilities. (E.g., "They don't treat us right" might become, "Teachers have a responsibility to be fair," or "The school doesn't make kids behave in class," might become "Parents have a responsibility to demand good behavior of their own children.")

In Virginia, RLC went further than this. After the initial Region-wide conference, the Virginia leadership chose to hold a series of four meetings in Norfolk, which has a number of Black colleges in the area. The response was encouraging, increasing from approximately 40 at the first meeting to over 70 at the fourth.

The outcome was a model program developed for two Norfolk neighborhoods, based on creating neighborhood centers on "neutral" ground--i.e., neither school sites nor places associated with adversarial groups. At both centers, volunteers provided parents with training in parenting skills and tutoring. AEL participated actively at one location and provided backup assistance to the Urban League at the other.

The most important lesson learned from the whole process was that working with and through existing leadership is absolutely critical. Existing leaders often insist on maintaining their roles as power brokers. Much of the momentum of the Norfolk programs has been lost because the programs did not match the perceived needs of leaders of tenant organizations in the two housing complexes where centers were located. By contrast, several urban programs in other states remain active because local leadership correctly perceives it to be their program, not one developed by outsiders.

Another important lesson is the importance of following through--at least to some prestated limit of involvement (i.e., not creating unrealistic expectations). In meetings with local groups, it is important to move past the stage of frustration and ventilation of old grievances. At the same time, people will accept that the AEL role is a limited one if those limits are spelled out in advance and they are left with a sense of what they themselves might do next.

With respect to RLC's secondary audience, work with parents of handicapped and learning disabled children has largely been with two West Virginia groups. One group, Coalition of Parents/Advocates (COP/A), consists of a small number of parent activists on the educational problems of the handicapped. Its members campaign actively, often on behalf of individual cases. The other group, the West Virginia Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (WVACLD), works to educate parents whose children have learning problems.

RLC support for COP/A has consisted mainly of a day-long training session on needs assessment techniques, organization skills, and the resources and constraints of school systems (e.g., how rules on records confidentiality preclude schools from releasing names of children with learning disabilities, even to groups that wish to be helpful). RLC also arranged for assistance in preparing a newsletter. For the WVACLD, an organizationally sophisticated group, RLC assistance has consisted on participation in workshops on substantive issues (e.g., children with reading problems).

Program Accomplishments

For the Region as a whole, the creation and maintenance of a network of minority leaders remains a significant accomplishment in itself. Participants at the initial 55-person conference were asked to name other individuals who could be used as contacts on minority problems. These people were categorized by position (e.g., "school board," "state education agency") and by closeness to the person who mentioned their name ("know personally" or "know by reputation.") The result is a well-classified database of human resources within a community where work is highly contact-dependent.

Other significant accomplishments include the following:

- In Bowling Green, Kentucky, local minority leadership has created a group called PARENT (Parents Addressing Real Educational Needs Together), which seems likely to be an effective way of communicating with local schools.
- In Huntington, West Virginia, AEL-RLC arranged for 11 low-income parents to attend an in-service training program held in Louisville, Kentucky, by the National Coalition of Title I, Chapter 1 Parents. The Huntington parents (with their school principal) toured the Louisville schools and returned with ideas that have been put into practice in Huntington, including a system where parents know routinely on what days of the week children will have have homework, as well as the subject matter of that homework.
- Although the model programs developed for Norfolk, Virginia, have lost momentum at that locality, they have attracted interest elsewhere. Specifically, a group of West Virginia leaders have adapted techniques for improving the performance of Black students to their needs and expect to begin a program based largely on the Virginia model in Charleston on December 1, 1990.
- In October 1989, COP/A informed AEL that it had been awarded a $15,000 grant to conduct parent training on federal regulations that apply to the handicapped, convene two statewide meetings, and create a newsletter. The COP/A volunteers credited AEL's training with having provided them with the sophistication needed to prepare this successful grant proposal.

As noted earlier, all of these accomplishments reinforce the importance of working with and through existing leadership, just as AEL as a whole has learned to work with and through established institutions. Although that approach does not absolutely guarantee success, not taking that approach seems to guarantee failure. In minority communities, where institutions are weak, building on individual strengths has proved to be especially crucial.

Classroom Instruction Program

Rationale for the Project

Classroom teachers, grades K-12, are the audience for the Classroom Instruction (CI) program.

Teachers, of course, have more to do than any other part of the educational establishment with whether or not students actually learn. Their competence and commitment determines whether plans, policies, and programs actually lead to changes in the lives of children.

Asked about their needs, teachers have no difficulty in producing wish lists: better working conditions, improved salaries, more and better supplies, and improved opportunities for professional development.

The AEL-CI effort addresses only the final item mentioned: professional development. This choice, of course, reflects what is possible for a Regional Laboratory, but it also addresses a serious problem that often cannot be solved locally. Many states require very little staff development--as few as two days per year in one state in the AEL Region. Moreover, these days have often been spent in perfunctory briefings. Teachers feel isolated from their peers, especially in small schools. Some have very few opportunities to observe other teachers teach, especially in their own subjects and grade levels. Ironically, many of the most ambitious lack graduate-school training in their own disciplines since they have chosen to take masters' degrees in school administration, as the most promising long-term track toward better pay. The best teachers--those most concerned to keep up with changes in their profession--are eager for opportunities for training and to learn how to acquire and use research-based information.

Key Procedures Employed

CI employs three basic strategies for reaching classroom teachers: (1) direct communications, both written and verbal; (2) "training-for-trainers" sessions; and (3) study groups. (Note that these are largely identical with those employed by the School Governance and Administration (SGA) program, with which CI works closely. The one major difference, a newly evolved pattern of conducting study groups within SGA, will be discussed under the subsection explaining SGA procedures.)

Direct communications. Like other parts of AEL, CI publishes inserts to The Link that go to its specific audience. Initially staff-written, the inserts on classroom instruction are increasingly contributed by practicing teachers and those AEL Board members who are themselves classroom teachers. Circulation for these inserts increased from 700 to 2,300 between 1986 and 1990, and, as teachers have contributed more articles, they have grown in size from four pages to 12 pages for the two most recent issues. In addition, CI regularly responds to requests for information from the editors of newsletters published by National Education Association (NEA) affiliates in AEL's four states. (All of these newsletters, incidentally, have had one or more feature stories on AEL as an information resource.)

In addition to these clearly channeled communications, CI fields ad hoc requests for information from individual teachers, at an average rate of over 150 per quarter (i.e., roughly three per working day). These requests typically come from teachers facing one of two situations: (1) a classroom problem, such as how to deal with a particular kind of teaching situation, or (2) a problem outside the teacher's daily experience, e.g., a topic raised as a result of the teacher's participation on a school or district committee or task force. The requests come in either by telephone, mail, contact at an event, or via an electronic bulletin board (in the case of schools participating in the Mastery in Learning program, in which AEL has a role to be noted later).

Training-for-trainers. During the past five years, AEL has conducted 44 training-for-trainers sessions attended by 1,419 trainers, typically for a day and a half. These individuals, in turn, conducted 590 training events, attended by 18,361 participants. (CI and SGA cosponsored most of these sessions, which covered topics like "Effective Questioning," "Marginal Learners," and "Teachers as Decisionmakers.")

What these numbers suggest is a highly cost-effective way of reaching teachers in a region whose population centers are near its periphery and whose most isolated populations are near its geographical center. It has been crucial to find a training strategy that extends the reach of AEL's resources while minimizing travel and internal personnel costs. Training-for-trainers does that. The process includes an annual "Potpourri," a kind of state-level trade fair with one vendor in which AEL showcases its training packages for some 100-125 attendees per session. This is followed by planning sessions with state professional associations and state departments of education.

Two other aspects of CI training merit special mention.

First, the Mastery in Learning program is an NEA project aimed at fostering dramatic structural changes in how schools operate--e.g., by pushing more decisionmaking down to the level of individual practitioners. Five of the 26 schools participating nationally are in the AEL Region, and AEL-CI is one of nine research sites responsible for research and documentation, in our case on parental involvement. Since late 1988, the 26 participating schools have been linked via an electronic bulletin board service connecting 80 sites in all. AEL research papers are distributed via this service to all schools in the network.

Second, CI provides technical assistance to a number of regional projects for improving the quality of classroom teaching. These include Project TEACH (Teach Everyone About Computers Here) in Charleston, West Virginia, for which CI developed training materials and trained community volunteers who substitute for classroom teachers taking inservice training in computer use. They also include work with seven "deregulated" schools in the Memphis City Schools Learning Laboratory (Tennessee) and assisting the Learning Laboratory in Louisville (Kentucky), and with Kanawha County Schools (West Virginia) in training advocates for at-risk students.

Study groups. Four study groups of teachers are organized each year, one in each state served by AEL. CI works with the state education association to identify a topic and choose participants. AEL convenes the meetings, provides background materials on the issue selected for study, helps in research design, and provides technical assistance in product development. State associations and local districts provide logistical support and participant time. Study groups produce reports that have subsequently become the basis for statewide conferences sponsored by state education associations.

Program Accomplishments

Broadly speaking, the most significant accomplishment may be the development of close ties with professional associations. One important effect of the study group approach is that it cements good working relations with state NEA affiliates. The AEL Region has approximately 160,000 teachers in 539 school districts. Working with and through professional associations is a necessity. A column in, for example, the Tennessee Education Association newsletter can reach 43,000 teachers, far more than AEL could reach through its own direct mailings. Although no one suggests that these low-impact contacts result directly in teacher behavioral changes, they alert teachers to the existence of alternatives.

As a training strategy, the training-for-trainers approach clearly stands out as a cost-effective strategy. Programs on at-risk students and marginal learners have won warm receptions. Several individual projects also stand out.

- The Virginia Education Association (VEA) led two study groups on middle schools, resulting in a 1989 report titled Middle Schools in the Making. This report went to more than 400 people in Virginia, and VEA used it as the basis for an instructional conference in 1990 in which study group participants served as presenters.

- Project TEACH, the Charleston-based program for using community volunteers to substitute for classroom teachers who learn to use computers in the classroom, has won the 1989 Presidential Award for Private Sector Initiatives. It has saved the local school district more than $40,000 per year, enlisted the services of more than 600 volunteers, and exposed up to 10,000 students annually to signficant adult models from the community. CI chaired the Project TEACH Lesson Planning Committee and developed a packet of teaching materials for the volunteers.

As noted at the beginning of this section, classroom teachers often work in isolation--often with little access to something as basic to a professional's work as a telephone. Although professionals in a Regional Lab are far from isolated, as measured by number of outside contacts, it is possible to become distanced from the classroom itself. One of the things that we have learned is that a mix of approaches--written materials, training sessions, and individual responses to teachers with problems--can be mutually reinforcing.

Most CI procedures are designed for efficiency and multiplying the effectiveness of a limited staff, but we continue to place high value on the superficially less cost-effective practice of responding to individual inquiries. Teachers appreciate the personal touch of talking to a human being and receiving a short handwritten note with whatever printed material may be sent. Equally important, however, direct contacts with individual customers enable CI staff members to recheck their own assumptions and recharge their own energies.

School Governance and Administration Program

Rationale for the Project

The School Governance and Administration (SGA) program works primarily with local school administrators of all kinds: superintendents and their staffs, principals, and various specialized positions like curriculum developers and counselors who are regarded by schools as administrative personnel. SGA works with school boards to a lesser extent, almost exclusively through state school board associations.

In practice, most SGA work is done collaboratively with state professional associations. There are 26 such associations for school administrators in the AEL Region--five to seven in each of our four states. (They include not only those for immediately obvious positions like "superintendent" but those for sharply defined groups like "middle-school principals.") Moreover, some of these associations are themselves umbrella organizations for other administrator groups; e.g., Leadership for Educational Administrative Development (LEAD) or an association in Kentucky representing 17 classifications of administrators and counselors.

This audience is important because school administrators are the gatekeepers to change. So, at a different level, are school boards. Although those responsible for administration and governance do not single-handedly determine what happens in classrooms, they can facilitate or impede changes that affect what children learn. Moreover, as schools move toward "site-based" decisionmaking, the role of the principal in particular will become even more crucial.

Administrators perceive themselves as having many needs, from larger budgets to instructional improvement to newer buildings. The need that SGA has chosen to give priority is professional development, emphasizing in particular those skills that directly affect classroom learning.

At first glance it may seem an unusual focus. School administrators are in formal terms highly educated. Most have completed work beyond the master's level, and many superintendents have doctorates. However, much of this training is dated. (Approximately half the principals in the AEL Region are now within five years of retirement.) Moreover, schools are changing fast. External pressures require that administrators respond to changes in laws, technology, and social expectations that did not exist when they went to school and studied "buses, buildings, bonds."

Key Procedures Employed

As is the case with AEL's CI program, SGA attempts to reach its audience with research-based information through two major kinds of face-to-face contact, supplemented by a program of disseminating generic information as widely as possible.

Information dissemination. SGA sees this activity primarily as a way of creating awareness of the availability of research-based information and of the existence of AEL as a source of that information. SGA staff make successful efforts to leverage the resources of other agencies to aid in dissemination. Kentucky, for example, puts SGA inserts in their wraparounds, so they go to 2,000 Kentucky recipients at no direct cost to AEL.

Training-for-trainers. This approach is essentially identical to that already described in the section on CI. It is done collaboratively with partners in participating states, usually professional associations or state education agencies, but occasionally individual school districts. AEL develops training materials and absorbs the cost of the trainer, but state sponsors handle other expenses, such as the costs of reprinting training materials.

Every effort is made to encourage participation by a two-person team consisting of an administrator and a teacher from the same district in order to improve the odds that someone will follow through on staff development at the local level. Busy administrators are more likely to follow through if a staff member is available for help; teachers are more likely to get support if an administrator has been through the same training process.

Study groups. Study groups sponsored by SGA began in the same way as those conducted by CI, but have evolved into a qualitatively different effort. Early study group topics were selected by approaching associations and asking for suggestions. Some of these were highly successful--e.g., an early study group report on orientation for first-year principals has, for the past five years, been a standard component of training offered by the Kentucky Association of School Administrators through their training academy.

Nevertheless, SGA concluded that it would be possible to get a higher payoff by focusing on issues that seem certain to affect directly the quality of classroom instruction (which is, after all, the ultimate justification for reaching any school-related audience) and to do so in such a way as to give study group participants a more intensive experience in analyzing and applying research-based information.

Two changes have emerged. First, SGA staff have taken a more active role in identifying study group topics. Second, the study group projects have expanded in both scope and scale.

The clearest example is the just-completed development and pilot testing of a project known as Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT). QUILT is an important research project developed on a shoestring budget. Approximately 20 participants worked over a 19-month period to analyze research on how teachers' style of asking classroom questions affects how much students learn. SGA staff promoted this topic as a study group effort for three reasons: (1) asking questions in the classroom is clearly central to virtually any teaching situation, regardless of grade level or course content; (2) an unclear or over-hasty style of questioning is particularly devastating for at-risk children, who are the focus of so many other school efforts, and (3) classroom questioning represents a teaching activity in which a principal or other teachers can observe, train, and reward desirable classroom questioning behaviors.

A similar labor-intensive study group has been conducted in 1990 on the issue of parent involvement in rural secondary schools. Approximately 30 participants included not only school administrators and teachers, but local business people and parents. As with QUILT, SGA staff believe that the benefits of an in-depth professional development activity for a relatively small number of leaders outweigh the benefits of less intensive involvement of larger numbers. There is some indication already that this is happening. At the most recent annual AEL "Potpourri," for example, the professionals who worked on QUILT were able to promote the package more convincingly than AEL staff could have done.

Program Accomplishments

Although this description has not stressed the numbers, types, and distribution of our publications, it is worth mentioning a few examples.

- A survey done at the request of a West Virginia superintendents' study group resulted in a change in state law. West Virginia had, by law, attempted to regulate the number of minutes teachers spent on teaching reading. The study group's statewide survey revealed that teachers actually spent less time teaching reading in response to arbitrary requirements than they did at their own initiative. As a result of this research, the law was changed.

- Training-for-trainers sessions have produced what appear to be impressive long-term results. For example, the "Targets for Trainers" workshop developed in collaboration with Kentucky's LEAD center was offered by three Regional Labs and adopted by the states of Texas and New Hampshire, as well as the National Association of School Boards.

- Similarly, a Virginia study group project that allowed school administrators to interview via satellite the authors of books on management and administration (not necessarily school administration) has attracted approximately 80 participants during four separate sessions. (Products include a facilitator's guide and four videotapes.)

- Finally, we consider the QUILT project to be a major accomplishment in two respects. First, QUILT is a major work product in its own right (e.g., a manual for three days of training and an array of testing and measurement materials). As such, QUILT promises to become the basis for instruction on question-asking skills for thousands of teachers. Second, QUILT provided a model for a new kind of study group. In this ambitious project, fewer

> individuals participated than in earlier study group sessions, but their involvement was (a) more intensive, (b) more sustained, and (c) yielded far more impressive results. Because the main cost of this activity was the time of the senior-level individuals involved, the direct cost to AEL was not nearly as large as that of a staff-produced study. That is, from the AEL point of view, it does not cost much more (at least not proportionately more) to manage a really ambitious project than it costs to manage a much smaller one. This expanded study group model is perhaps analogous to the "work vacations" sponsored by international environmental or archaeological groups, for which sophisticated amateurs actually pay for the privilege of going on field trips or digs with fulltime professionals. The payoff for them is the experience, including the experience of working together on a large project, something seldom learned in doctoral programs that stress individual research efforts and difficult for administrators to achieve on the job.

In short, SGA considers its mission to help administrators and school governance officials adapt to the rapid pace of educational change. Many administrative decisions are made by rote or by reflex, yet we have found a hunger for more thoughtful alternatives. By helping administrators and teachers work together to change their own behaviors, we help them to make schools work better for children and adults within their districts.

Policy and Planning Center

Rationale for the Project

The principal audience for the Policy and Planning Center consists of Chief State School Officers. The Center also serves other policymakers: governors and their immediate staffs, state board of education members, and the chairs of legislative education committees and their staffs. On occasion, it also provides information to "decisionmakers"--i.e., individuals who do not, strictly speaking, "make" policies, but who implement policies at relatively senior levels.

The justification for focusing the work of an AEL center on this elite audience is that its members can, by a single decision, change the careers of educators and the lives of children. They shape education in their states. One of them, responding to a routine questionnaire on how information provided by the Center was used, replied laconically: "We rewrote the state law."

Like other groups served by AEL, Chief State School Officers (and other senior-level policymakers) need timely and objective information. But they have an additional need: a way of comparing notes across state lines, talking candidly about their problems, and thinking through policy options before making decisions. The work of other programs within AEL involve contacts with Chief State School Officers out of respect for the chain of command within a state, but the real audience is located somewhere lower in the state education hierarchy. The Center's mission is to work directly "with and for" Chief State School Officers--i.e., to meet some of their unique needs as policymakers.

The goal of the Center is to increase the use of information-based decisionmaking in policy formulation. This means clarifying the policy issue at stake, identifying options, and seeking information from other states, research literature, and constituent groups. It is distinct both from seat-of-the-pants decisionmaking and from marshaling arguments in support of a preconceived position.

Key Procedures Employed

Basically, the Center employs two strategies to reach policymakers and decisionmakers: (1) convening and (2) producing policy-oriented papers. Within each approach, the Center has varied the scale of the effort involved in recognition of the varying needs of its audience.

The Center has convened policymakers in two modes: "forums" and "symposia."

The "forum" strategy was originally seen as an event that would take place at meetings of the Center Advisory Committee, which consists of the Chief State School Officers and one representative of each of them, who serve on the AEL Board of Directors. At the request of the participants, it quickly became customary to invite other key leaders from the state in which the committee happened to be meeting, with the result that average attendance has ranged from six to 25 persons. Members also sometimes ask AEL staff to bring in an outside expert on the topic before the group.

Forum topics have included the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (in 1987); building consensus for educational reform (in 1988, stimulated by West Virginia's interest in developing a politically supportable improvement package); and restructuring finance systems to achieve equity in funding (in 1988, initiated by pending and threatened court cases throughout the Region). What these and other topics had in common was that they all were "hot" at the time of the discussions, and Chief State School Officers wanted to talk about them among themselves and a few other trusted leaders.

One forum--in 1989 on class size--substantially outgrew the original model. The West Virginia interest in class size was so intense that the forum attracted more than 40 participants--the largest meeting by far, indicating that the Chief State School Officer's request for "help to get the dialogue going" reflected a widely felt need.

The AEL "symposia" have represented a deliberate attempt to reach a larger audience. Envisioned as a meeting of about 20 people from around the Region, their attendance eventually reached 150 as the advisory committee invited more people. The agendas included distance education, rethinking vocational education, rural education, early care and education, and the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. (The final symposium, on the Kentucky legislation, was more of a forum, limited to a small number of real policymakers.)

In addition to convening meetings, the Center produces two kinds of papers. "Policy Briefs" are short (4-6 pages) and focused on topics of high current interest. They reach a large audience (about 700 people on the regular mailing list). "Issue Papers" are longer (25-40 pages). They also focus on topics of current interest, but attempt to synthesize current thinking and practice on a particular topic. They are sent routinely to members of the advisory committee and others they designate, but abstracts appear in the Communication Service Assistance Program with information on how to order them. A few have been greatly in demand. For example, 1,000 copies of Effective Practices and Structures for Middle Grades Education have been distributed, counting 550 reproduced by a state education agency from a master supplied by AEL.

Program Accomplishments

Taken as a whole, our "forums" have been our most successful strategy. As noted earlier, one of the most strongly felt needs of top-level policymakers is to talk candidly to each other. This requires a high level of trust. A meeting could be spoiled by a poor choice of an outside expert--e.g., someone strongly identified as an advocate of a particular position or an academic insensitive to the perspective of senior-level administrators. Chief State School Officers control both the overall agenda and invitation list, and they look to AEL to provide disinterested support.

Examples of impacts of the "forum" mode of communication include the following:

- In West Virginia, the forum on class size led directly to a change in state law. In the same state, following a forum on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the state school superintendent requested and received a legislative appropriation to join a consortium of states working on developing professional assessments. He attributed this outcome in large part to attendance at the forum by the chairs of his state's House and Senate Education and Finance Committees, with the result that those key legislators understood the rationale for his request and were able to explain it to colleagues.
- Advisory committee members chose a discussion of cross-state projects as the focus of one forum. Out of the discussion came the formation of a Technology Collaborative, whose members are the technology/distance learning staff from the four state departments of education. Collaborative members identified 18 possible technology-related projects that could be jointly conducted with AEL coordination. Now, 22 Tennessee and 14 West Virginia students are enrolled in Virginia's Latin and Advanced Placement physics courses available by satellite. In addition, a regional survey of training needs of library media specialists has been conducted to help states plan ways to upgrade the skills of school library personnel to meet the challenges of modern information-technology--e.g., computerized databases and satellite communications.

The Center has been less satisfied with the cost-effectiveness of its symposia. They have been "successes" in the sense of having attracted relatively wide audiences, but at what we have concluded is an inordinate investment of staff time. A large conference takes on a life of its own. Not only are the logistics more complex, but materials must be far more elaborate than those used as background notes for a small meeting of people with highly similar interests. In the last analysis, policymakers want to talk to each other, and for this they need a small meeting, a measure of privacy, and highly specific staff support.

One limitation of the Center's decision to make Chief State School Officers our principal audience is that state departments of education are not always where the action is. In Kentucky, for example, the state judiciary directed the legislature to produce a reform package, and this was done with little direct involvement of the state's education community. Yet our conviction is that our first audience must be those officers legally charged with making and implementing school policy. The Center is convinced that having a consistent long-term strategy will yield a higher payoff than attempting to meet everyone's needs.

In fact, we have met a great many needs because our audience raises questions of current interest. We make some efforts to anticipate questions, but have found it more important to be able to respond fast. When we do so, we have found this group of elite policymakers does, in fact, want research-based information and will use it if it comes to them in ways that address their preferences for both form and substance.

Professional Preparation and Research Program

Rationale for the Project

The Professional Preparation and Research (PP&R) program works in partnership with state affiliates of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to encourage faculty members of teacher-training institutions in the Region to work more closely with local schools.

The poverty of the Appalachian Region affects institutions at all levels. Local schools need the fruits of R & D activities, both information and educational products, and they need trained people who know how to use applied R & D to bring about changes in how schools operate. In principle, the Region's approximately 100 teacher-training institutions represent a tremendous resource for schools. As a practical matter, the Region's poverty also affects these institutions. None of them, for example, has a major educational R & D program. Teaching loads discourage many faculty from doing any research at all. Many lack budgets for out-of-pocket expenses associated with attending meetings and gathering data. Yet there are few other sources of R & D expertise, such as private research centers, in the Region.

AEL's research has shown that local schools needing information or help go to one of three sources: (1) their state Department of Education, (2) AEL itself, or (3) a local college or university. It seemed logical to try to harness the energies of college faculties to produce new R & D and to work more closely with schools. Whether this could be done on an extremely low budget remained to be seen, making the entire project something of an experiment.

Key Procedures Employed

The most important operational decision of the project was to work through state ACTE leadership. These organizations have contacts in the Region's institutions of higher education and are led by individuals (usually college deans) who enjoy the respect of their colleagues. Since they share AEL's sense that helping local schools is an appropriate and desirable role for college faculty, but lack staff, they welcomed a partnership with AEL.

Four procedures have been followed to carry out the PP&R program: (1) study groups, (2) a series of Minigrants to research teams, (3) annual conferences with state ACTE leadership, and (4) a publications and communications program.

Before describing these individually, candor requires noting an early unsuccessful experiment. Early in the past contract period, PP&R had hoped that it would be possible to achieve the power of a single R & D center by connecting via modem-equipped computers a critical mass of individual researchers at geographically scattered institutions. A pilot program in West Virginia failed when only three higher education institutions chose to hook up to the network. In 1987, a similar attempt to establish routine communications links among a few major institutions in different states also failed to attract much interest. In that year, these attempts were discontinued.

Study groups. Early experiments with computer-based networking were replaced with a more modest program of study groups. These are, as the name implies, groups of individual researchers who do educational R & D across institutional lines. Both topics and researchers are selected by the leadership of the state ACTEs; AEL requires only that the research be applied research focused on the needs of schools. PP&R contribution is limited to modest financial support for travel, report preparation, and other incidental expenses. (Because the researchers involved are college faculty members, AEL provides only modest technical assistance on research design or methodological issues. The PP&R study groups differ in this respect from those conducted by the Classroom Instruction and the School Governance and Administration programs, which are described earlier in this section.)

Minigrants. The Minigrant program has provided modest grants (averaging about $2,200) to individual researchers under a competition managed by the state associations. (Roughly one-third of the applicants were accepted.) As with study groups, the AEL funds go to defray incidental costs of research. The projects may involve (a) applied research, (b) doctoral thesis work leading toward building a body of knowledge on how to improve education, or (c) developing and testing innovative training for professional educators.

Annual meetings with state associations. Since 1987, PP&R staff have met annually with the leaders of each of the four state ACTE organizations. These are working groups, ranging in attendance from 10 to 25 participants. The first conference, for example, was used to firm up criteria for the Minigrant program and to train proposal reviewers, who have served consistently throughout the life of the program. At the first meeting, each state ACTE group also designed and agreed to implement one study group in collaboration with PP&R.

Publications and communications. Like other components of AEL, PP&R transmits "R & D Notes" on a monthly basis to its audience--in this case, to individual contacts at each of the Region's teacher-training institutions. Prior to working with AEL, three of the four regional professional associations had no newsletters of their own. For these three states, PP&R now provides typesetting and printing of copy provided by the state ACTE officers. The resulting newsletters are wrapped around The Link.

Program Accomplishments

Generally speaking, the most significant PP&R accomplishment has been to strengthen state ACTE associations. As noted, three of these groups lacked their own newsletters before the start of the ACTE/AEL partnership. They now represent a vehicle for change that has become increasingly oriented toward the promotion of applied research.

The study group strategy has proved a cost-effective way of habituating researchers to work together across institutional lines. Specific projects that have attracted favorable attention include (1) a Tennessee study of recruitment and retention of minorities in teacher-training institutions, resulting in a widely circulated publication titled Programs of Promise, and (2) a Kentucky study that focused on field experiences for prospective teachers, resulting in a published monograph.

Similarly, the Minigrant program has yielded a high return on a low investment. Very few grants will not yield publishable reports (either because of researchers' inability to deliver or other special problems), but more than 90 percent will do so. A few have had impressive outcomes.

- For example, a 1988 Virginia study broke new ground in documenting the experiences of gifted young women who entered a small women's college under a program of accelerated entry.

- In another instance, a Minigrant permitted the University of Kentucky to convene faculty members from all state-supported institutions involved in training school principals. They worked together to develop new program ideas. As a result, the participants decided to bring back to life the Kentucky Council of Professors of Educational Administration, an association that had previously died from disuse. This revitalized association still functions as an ongoing activity.

- A faculty member at a small private college had performed a study of dropout problems in a local school district. One conclusion of the research was that students who dropped out of school had felt like outsiders within the school. The researcher used a Minigrant to support a kind of "Big Brother" program under which first-year college students interested in teaching careers worked one-on-one with at-risk students in the school district.

Taking the PP&R experience as a whole, we feel that it demonstrates that it is indeed possible to shift teacher-training institutions toward applied research and provision of R & D-based services to local schools without major expenditures. The key element in the AEL program has been the close partnership with the state professional associations. We still hope, incidentally, that it may yet prove possible to use computers and modern communications technology to create a research institute without walls or political boundaries. The increased availability and ease of use of the technology is one factor. But the more critical factor is the creation of a mass of people who share a sense of purpose and the habit of collaboration. The AEL/state ACTE partnership has made modest but signficant progress toward focusing the potentially large resources represented by our higher education community toward a common goal of improving the quality of public school education in a region that needs all the resources it can find.

School Services Center

Rationale for the Project

The School Services Center (SSC) has a broadly defined scope of work that includes producing R & D products, as well as providing technical assistance and information services to the six other AEL projects. Through the other projects, SSC serves the educators, local board members, and policymakers of the AEL Region. An important secondary audience is the staff of AEL, which relies on SSC for information services, consultation, coordination of internal and external evaluation activities, and report preparation.

The importance of serving the Region's educators and policymakers is self-evident. Education practitioners are responsible for delivering services to children, and what they do directly determines the quality of education in the Region. The importance of those who make educational policy is equally clear. Serving AEL staff is instrumental both to fulfilling contractual obligations and to successful completion of their missions.

The principal need of SSC's primary audience is information that is objective, timely, and directly applicable to their problems. Local education practitioners are absorbed in day-to-day work and find it difficult to stay abreast of educational research. Their decisions have long-range implications for children, but these decisions are often made under severe time constraints. These teachers, counselors, principals, and supervisors often have no good place to call for help. Their contacts with colleagues in other districts may be limited, and such contacts at best yield one other perspective--not systematically tested knowledge.

In addition, policymakers are often confronted by advocates of particular positions. They need an objective source of information, not someone trying to sell them on something.

SSC attempts to provide information that meets each of these criteria. It fields ad hoc inquiries and disseminates information of broad interest to a number of clearly defined groups.

Key Procedures Employed

SSC provides information to its audiences in three ways: (1) providing the requested material, (2) consultation, and (3) technical assistance. These phrases stand for points on a continuum, but each represents an increasingly complex level of service.

- "Providing information" is self-explanatory (e.g., "Here is the report on class size that you requested.").

- "Consultation" refers to asking questions to ascertain inquirers' real needs and and making suggestions to expand their awareness of options (e.g., "If you are interested in the cost/learning tradeoffs of the class-size question, have you considered other approaches that may have better payoffs for you?").

- "Technical assistance" means actually helping a group work through a problem (e.g., by providing help with needs assessment, questionnaire design, or data interpretation).

Because these three levels of service are progressively more expensive, SSC must try to get as much mileage as possible out of its staff-intensive activities. Therefore, it shapes its "consultation" and "technical assistance" experiences into reports that can then be replicated with minimal staff work and disseminated through a number of structured channels.

Among these channels for communicating R & D information to its audiences are the following:

- The Resource Center handles ERIC search requests; maintains special files on approximately 90 "hot" topics; maintains a professional library that includes reference works, audiotapes, videotapes, and computer software (e.g., statistical packages); and disseminates summaries of research prepared by the national Communication Service Assistance Program under the regional heading of "R & D Notes."

- The AEL newsletter, The Link, is produced in a modular format that includes inserts tailored specifically for these audiences: classroom teachers, administrators and school boards, staff in rural and small schools, and teacher educators. Teacher educators in three states also receive their association's (state affiliates of AACTE) newsletter as a "wraparound" to The Link.

- Annual "multistate studies" focus on priority research topics identified by the SSC Advisory Committee of the AEL Board. Recent issues have included reports on substance-abuse programs, early childhood education, and the demographic characteristics of "rural and small" schools.

- As part of its staff support functions, SSC has provided professional development sessions for AEL staff. In 1990, for example, these included (1) a two-day workshop on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences-Personal Computer, (2) an early briefing on Kentucky's education reform plans that led to the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, and (3) two half-day workshops on the upgraded curriculum and materials for AEL's Career Exploration and Planning Program.

- Other staff-support functions include coordination of the submission of AEL publications to the appropriate ERIC Clearinghouses and the selection of an external evaluator. This assignment went to Western Michigan University, selected because of its extensive experience in conducting independent evaluations, its knowledge of the national network of Labs and Centers, and its location outside the AEL Region.

Program Accomplishments

The following accomplishments seem both worth mentioning in their own right and because they illustrate how SSC attempts to serve its audiences.

- During 1990, AEL has been on the cutting edge of the Kentucky educational reform efforts (described nationally as "revolutionary and unprecedented"). We played a significant role in briefing Kentucky policymakers on program design options. SSC followed up the staff development program (four months before the legislation was passed) with a second session for education officials from other states in the Region and for OERI.

- In 1989, SSC supported the researcher responsible for the AEL Home-Oriented Preschool Education (HOPE) study, enabling him to perform followup research on work done earlier. This study demonstrated the high payback of investment in early childhood education. The West Virginia legislature, meeting in special session, passed a bill recommending that the state education agency develop a program "like the HOPE program."

- Our multistate report on early childhood education has attracted considerable interest, especially because the first of the president's six goals for the year 2000 is that all children will start school ready to learn. In addition, the Kentucky Education Reform Act requires all school districts to provide school services for four year olds who are disadvantaged or handicapped.

Among the lessons learned, three stand out:

First, it is extremely important to have materials tailored for specific audiences. The Link, with its audience-specific inserts and wraparounds, is a prime example. Similarly, callers appreciate it when we are able to move beyond providing information to active consultation.

Second, we have learned that objectivity cannot be obtained merely by stating it as a policy; it takes work. We are often called by people who want ammunition to support a particular position. Although it would be possible to respond to such requests, we have learned to resist doing so, preferring to give more balanced reports and letting callers make what use they will of the information provided.

Third, a Regional Laboratory, like a private business, must make continuing efforts to improve the quality of its service. Although our primary audience may have no comparable source of information, its members will make decisions without consultation if they perceive that they are not getting answers fast enough or sufficiently focused on their individual needs. We routinely send evaluation questionnaires to those who request information from us. One complaint has been that callers are sometimes shuffled from one staff member to another before making connection with the right resource person. We are responding by creating a system that keeps secretaries informed about AEL events, staff roles, and staff availability. Similarly, we have been told that The Link would be more useful in a standard 8-1/2" x 11" notebook size with prepunched holes. We are making that change.

Rural, Small Schools Program

Rationale for the Project

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program was created to serve the needs of educators and community members in small, rural communities of the AEL Region. The Region is largely rural, and more than 60 percent of its school districts fit that description, a fact documented by the RSS program staff. Educational needs are many and pressing--including a poor funding base, high numbers of at-risk students, and comparatively low academic performance (measured by achievement scores, completion rates, and college attendance rates). AEL understood these needs to be symptomatic of the socioeconomic condition of the Region.

Although disadvantaged, rural areas and the people who live in them are vital to the Region's history, social institutions, and culture. At the same time, to some observers, these people represent the past rather than the future. RSS staff maintain a different view, based on both their reading of the literature and their experience as citizens of the Region. In the view of program staff, rural Appalachian educators and community members are disadvantaged because they lack access to power.

Power comes in many guises. The sort of power with which RSS staff work is access to knowledge--the expert power that rural people need in order to influence what happens in their schools and their communities. In a sense, access to such power is the virtue of education. Many have written about the implications of the "information age" and the balance of power in rural America. Most such statements are more speculation than fact, but it is clear that the changes that have begun are portentous. If education fails to provide access to knowledge, it in effect supports the status quo, and rural areas will fall further behind.

A number of lines of evidence suggest that rural communities thrive if, and only if, their schools thrive. If one accepts this premise, then it follows that programs to improve communities and programs to improve schools each produce what economists call "multiplier" effects in the rural social system. That is, such efforts have effects beyond those explicitly put forward by any single project. To this end, the RSS program employed a variety of related strategies.

Key Procedures Employed

Key procedures used in the project included (1) demonstration sites, (2) coalition building and networking, and (3) database building.

Demonstration sites. Four rural, small, and poor school districts were sites of demonstrations of the AEL School-Community Improvement Process. In these sites, staff helped local educators and citizens identify and prioritize educational needs. (The sites were awarded grants of $5,000 for this purpose.) Subsequently, staff helped participants develop and implement a school improvement project based on those locally identified needs. The aim was to demonstrate a systematic collaboration between school and community to improve rural communities.

In three states, further attempts were made to enlist faculty members at institutions of higher education to aid in replicating these school-community collaborations in other locations. For reasons that differed from site to site, these were uniformly unsuccessful.

Networking. Work such as the Lab's cannot be accomplished without widespread participation and support from other organizations that share its agenda. Coalition and network building, for example, entailed a regional adaptation of the School-Community Improvement Process in Tennessee's Upper Cumberland Region (with two major regional organizations), and enhancing the capacity of a regional library network in rural southern Virginia (with the assistance of a local college). Staff took active roles, too, in major professional organizations in rural education. Much of this network building was augmented by staff members' dual roles in the RSS program and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, located at AEL since June 1988.

Database building. Action must be grounded in knowledge, a position the RSS program took with clients and its own professional staff. Five major statistical databases about schools in the Region were developed in 1986-1990 from a variety of existing data sources. In addition, three other databases were compiled by staff: (1) over 600 recent articles and reports on rural education for staff and clients, (2) a database of National Diffusion Network programs for rural areas, and (3) a database of promising practices to inform development of AEL's From One Rural School to Another. The practices in this last database were carefully described, categorized, reviewed, and evaluated before being widely disseminated in the Region.

Program Accomplishments

Demonstrations of the AEL School-Community Improvement Process achieved positive results in three of four original sites. One district created a strong program of parent involvement. Another used its grant to secure extensive community input to a feasibility study on building a middle school (a proposal that had a history of having been handled so badly in the past that it had aroused school-community antagonisms). In a third instance, student participation on a planning committee led to an emphasis on improving "school climate." In one of these sites, the community has undertaken to set up a second structure to develop a community improvement project. In the fourth area, however--one of the poorest in the entire nation--a planned newsletter (in a community that has no newspaper) has not materialized.

Attempts to replicate these demonstration projects through faculty at teacher-training institutions produced disappointing results. Problems ranged from personnel turnover (at both the college and local levels) to a disastrous fire whose aftermath preoccupied local school officials.

The demonstrations taught staff more about the information needs of faculty and students in rural schools. Staff began to elaborate these insights in work with the Southern Virginia Library Consortium early in 1989, and this work--perhaps the most significant of the several RSS special projects--contributed practical evidence needed to design the 1991-1995 RSS plans.

Networking brought staff into closer contact with the major regional and national organizations involved with rural issues. Staff participated in literally dozens of conferences, developed newsletters and studies connected with the RSS work, guest-edited issues of two separate professional journals, published 10 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and published one chapter in an edited book.

Database building improved the expertise not only of program staff, but of the entire Laboratory. This expertise in turn contributed to the quality of RSS and of AEL publications pertinent to rural issues. As a result of both this activity and networking, clients came increasingly to view AEL as a source of reliable information about rural areas.

Rural citizens are both generalists and deft improvisers. These are characteristics capable of transforming information into rural power. If rural schools and communities are to thrive, then service providers must take advantage of these characteristics: Rural programs cannot be designed from a distance. The 1986-90 fieldwork convinced RSS staff that close interaction with rural clients at the local level is essential as projects develop and mature. Otherwise, staff are likely to overlook the specific features of rural existence (and the inherent opportunities) that determine program success.

PART II

MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS, COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS, AND INSIGHTS DURING 1986-90

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The purpose of this section is to provide descriptions of some of the Laboratory's most significant accomplishments during the contract period. The method for selecting these accomplishments was to ask the seven project directors to identify for two categories the most significant accomplishments from the perspective of their individual projects. Many of these accomplishments were presented previously in the "innerview" sections of AEL's quarterly reports.

Greatest Accomplishments: 1986-90

Descriptions of the Laboratory's greatest accomplishments during the contract period, as seen through the eyes of the seven project directors, follow.

Participation in AEL School Excellence Workshops Exceeds 18,000

In 44 separate training-for-trainers events conducted in FY 86-90 using the Classroom Instruction (CI) program and School Governance and Administration (SGA) program-developed School Excellence Workshops, AEL staff trained 1,419 trainers who, in turn, conducted 590 workshop replications. A total of 18,361 teachers, administrators, and other educators were participants in those workshop replications completed throughout the Region. The ratio of trainers to replication participants was approximately 1:13. These figures and the consistently positive evaluations participants give to CI/SGA training-for-trainers events substantiates their inclusion as a major accomplishment for AEL in the Region.

By November 30, 1990, CI and SGA staff collaborated with each major teacher and administrator association and state department of education in offering training-for-trainers events. Also resulting from the training mission of the two programs were the 16 AEL School Excellence Workshop packages that provide trainers with everything necessary, from background reading to masters for transparencies, to conduct awareness sessions, half-or full-day workshops, or series of workshops. The workshops address topics of current and perennial interest and importance to teachers and administrators, such as, "Educating the Preschooler," "Effective Questioning," "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help through Instruction and Policy," and "Teacher as Decisionmaker: Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School."

Practitioners Become "Researchers" in AEL Study Groups

The School Governance and Administration (SGA) and Classroom Instruction (CI) programs have employed a study group strategy to conduct short-term R & D action research projects on topics of interest to teachers and administrators. The SGA program conducted 14 study group projects in collaboration with either an administrator, school board association, or LEAD center and selected school districts. An SGA study group generally lasts between 18 and 24 months from conceptualization and topic selection through the final report preparation. SGA study groups have involved more than 250 administrators, school board members, association staff, and LEAD center staff. SGA topics have included studies on instructional time, school board member training needs, elementary guidance counseling, public opinions about Kentucky school boards, perceptions of a state's career ladder program, perceptions of beginning principals, and participatory decisionmaking, as well as effective questioning and thinking. Study group products have been disseminated jointly by the associations and AEL statewide, regionally, and nationally through ERIC, the Communication Service Assistance Program, etc.

CI study groups have numbered 19 over the past five years. Cosponsored with the National Education Association state affiliates in the Region, these study groups are composed primarily of teachers. More than 160 educators have served as study group members who investigated a single educational issue and produced a publication of use to practitioners. AEL and teacher associations disseminated 18 study group publications dealing with the following topics: mentoring for beginning teachers, parent education, consolidation, early childhood resource kit, at-risk students, grade combination teaching, and school-based decisionmaking. While AEL's Resource Center annually disseminates about 600 CI study group products on request, state associations have printed thousands of copies from CI-supplied camera-ready masters. In FY 89 alone, more than 9,300 copies of CI study group products were printed and disseminated by the NEA state affiliates. The study group process is being adopted with CI staff assistance by the Virginia Education Association as a model of professional development through which teachers can earn recertification credit.

1986 Technology Symposium's Impact Still Being Felt in AEL Region

The Policy and Planning Center's first symposium, in 1986, addressed the need for increased availability of advanced and/or low incidence courses throughout the Region. The event included exploration of satellite-delivered or open-broadcast interactive courses and of interactive videodisk technology. A highlight of the event was a microwave hookup with an advanced calculus class being broadcast to 26 school divisions from Virginia's first electronic classroom at Varina High School. For many, the symposium was their first opportunity to see an example of distance education. Many spinoffs in distance education involving the four AEL member states are directly attributable to this one conference. In West Virginia, a local Superintendents' Technology Study Group was created by the State Department of Education and state grant monies were made available for the 1987-88 school year to support the installation of the first 19 sites for satellite-delivered courses. Each year the program expanded, so that by the start of the 1990-91 school year, more than 130 schools had the capability to receive high school credit courses from satellite. Collaboratively-supported activities also resulted in an annual appropriation since 1988 of approximately $250,000 from the West Virginia Legislature to support distance learning activities in the state. In Kentucky, a state board task force on technology was created following the symposium to study and make recommendations concerning the role of the state in providing leadership for technology use in the schools. Continued interest in technology by advisory committee members prompted them to include the topic on a July 1987 list of ideas for projects that could be undertaken across state lines with Policy and Planning Center coordination. At their behest, the Center convened the technology/ distance learning staff from each state and formed what has come to be known as the Technology Collaborative. As a result of jointly planned collaborative activities, the Tennessee Department of Education in 1988 created a half-time staff position to coordinate distance learning efforts in the state; broadcast a two-hour statewide awareness teleconference, moderated by the Policy and Planning Center director; adopted state distance education guidelines; and, for the past two years, funded a $200,000 pilot project to install distance education equipment and programming to 14 sites each year across the state. Virginia is the pioneer in distance education in the Region. Virginia officials expressed interest in sharing its expertise and investment in distance education with other member states. Thus, in school year 1990-91, as a result of activities undertaken by the Technology Collaborative, 22 students from Tennessee and 14 students from West Virginia became classmates in Virginia's courses available by satellite--the first time that students outside the Commonwealth were able to enroll in Virginia's courses.

Benefits of 1987 Working Conference Reach Into 1990

The Professional Preparation and Research (PP&R) program's First Annual Working Conference was an especially significant event. This meeting, held in October 1987, brought together for the first time key leaders from the state associations of colleges for teacher education (state ACTEs) from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The outcomes of this working conference included (a) training of the 12-member Minigrant Review Panel that continued its work through 1990, (b) developing the actual plans for each state ACTE's study group, and (c) sharing detailed information among the group about special factors and conditions affecting teacher preparation in each state. Not only did this working conference set the pattern for the program's future conferences, but it produced a panel of reviewers and a set of state ACTE/PP&R study groups that have retained their vitality through FY 90.

HOPE Project Provides Significant Return on Investment

The 1986-88 followup study of participants in AEL's Home-Oriented Preschool Education (HOPE) experiment revealed that the cost benefits of early childhood education programs exceeded previous expectations. HOPE, according to research director Edward Gotts, prevented 73 children from dropping out of school. Those 73 individuals are likely to earn $107,500 more during their work life than if they had dropped out. The gain in expected lifetime earnings for this group totals $7,847,500, which exceeds the total cost to the government of both the development of the HOPE program and the followup study of its effects. The study also reports better school achievement and attendance, better parental involvement, and better post-school success for students who participated in the HOPE program than for comparable groups of students that did not participate in the program.

Use of CD-ROM in Virginia Exceeds Expectations

Member high schools of the Southside Virginia Library Network were encouraged to subscribe to ERIC on CD-ROM for their students and faculties. Faculty training was provided regarding the contents of ERIC and how to access the database on CD-ROM. Student and faculty use of this new resource was beyond expectations. Everyone was surprised to find high school cheerleaders, local school board members, and community members going to the high school library to find answers in the ERIC database to educational problems they confronted. Teachers were researching classroom procedures to support their desire to implement new techniques. Students were finding documents and articles they needed to complete classroom assignments. Teachers and administrators were finding help in preparing papers for graduate courses they were taking. In general, the new resource became an integral part of the educational progress of schools in the network.

Best Work in Each State Served

After reflecting on their Laboratory work for the last five years, project directors described their best work in each of AEL's four states. Their descriptions follow.

Kentucky

Study group pieces together staff development system called QUILT. AEL has conducted study groups (18- to 24-month projects) in each state in collaboration with administrators' associations, school boards' associations, and LEAD centers during the five-year contract period. The School Governance and Administration program has involved more than 250 people in study group work. The Kentucky Association of School Administrators, AEL, and teams from five Kentucky school districts worked together during 1989-90 to develop and pilot a long-term professional development experience for teachers on the topic of effective classroom questioning. This project was the result of administrators' concerns that workshops alone do not change the way instruction occurs; that in order to change, teachers need to receive regular feedback, continued support, and followup after initial training. The staff development system, Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT), will be rigorously field tested in 1991-92 in an attempt to measure the effects of different methods of delivering staff development to teachers.

Kentucky educators tell their story; other states listen and learn. Kentucky's landmark court case and the resulting reform package are hot topics in all parts of the country and especially in this Region, where neighboring states are already beginning to see similarities between the Kentucky reform and proposed changes in education in their states. Several Policy and Planning Center activities of FY 90 focused on helping Kentucky tell its story and helping others to learn more about the Kentucky education reform. The first such event, in December 1989, was a joint effort of the Policy and Planning Center and the School Services Center. Dan Branham and H. M. Snodgrass, deputy and associate deputy for research and planning in the Kentucky Department of Education, briefed AEL staff on the Supreme Court decision and the political structures created to orchestrate the General Assembly's response to the court. Advisory committee interest in the topic was also intense. An attempt was made to present a similar session for the committee during its January meeting. Legislative calendars always influence attendance at the first quarter meeting, so the discussion was postponed until all legislatures had adjourned. A Center-sponsored briefing for a small number of high-level policymakers from the member states was conducted in May 1990 and served as the Center's annual symposium. Virginia's deputy secretary for education and Chief State School Officer attended the May 15 briefing. As a result of their participation, the Center was asked to help identify key people from Kentucky who could present different aspects of the reform to the Governor's Commission on Educational Opportunity for All Virginians, a blue-ribbon group created by Virginia's new governor to examine and make recommendations concerning pupil disparity, fiscal disparity, and program disparity in the schools of the Commonwealth. The Center director attended the commission meeting in July, where three key Kentucky decisionmakers--the secretary of education and the humanities, the cochair of the Task Force on Education Reform's committee on finance, and an assistant superintendent in the Department of Education--spent the day with commission members in small-group, detailed discussion of the changes required by the law. As a result of that meeting and of other discussions, the Center director prepared an issue of "Policy Briefs" that takes a different approach to understanding the fundamental changes mandated in Kentucky. It discusses the philosophical changes embodied in the law.

The final Kentucky-focused activity for FY 90 was the Center's involvement in the AEL-sponsored Task 5 Regional Laboratory Symposium on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. The Center director identified and secured the participation of key people involved in the design of the reform and in the process used to achieve its passage.

AEL Minigrant effort resurrects dormant organization. One of the first Minigrants awarded by the Professional Preparation and Research program produced results that were far beyond those originally planned. Professor Eddy J. Van Meter and his colleagues initially planned to undertake a study of the principal training programs operating in Kentucky's Regent (state-supported) institutions. When the study was completed, Van Meter requested an extension of his Minigrant so that faculty representatives of the programs studied could be convened to review the study's findings, examine possible program improvements, and explore interinstitutional networking. One major result was the reactivation of a dormant state organization that had not flourished since the 1970s. The Kentucky Council of Professors of Educational Administration (KCPEA) was restarted as a direct result of the Minigrant-supported effort, according to Van Meter. KCPEA again offers a forum for ongoing dialogue about the improvement of school administrator training programs in Kentucky.

Staff development keeps AEL staff on cutting edge of education reform issues. Four months before the revolutionary Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 became law, AEL staff were informed fully of the contents of the act. Kentucky education officials traveled to AEL to provide a half-day briefing session on the legislation for all staff. Deputy State Superintendent Dan Branham and legislation expert H. M. Snodgrass conducted the briefing at the invitation of the Policy and Planning Center (PPC) and the School Services Center. This briefing session stimulated a special PPC symposium in Lexington for policymakers from the AEL Region; a series of presentations to the AEL Board on reforms in each of our states; a Task 5 symposium in Lexington for OERI and representatives of the other Regional Educational Laboratories; special coverage of the reform act in AEL's newsletter, The Link; and two proposals to OERI that AEL take the lead in documenting and reporting to the profession the progress of Kentucky's reform efforts.

High tech takes AEL product information to thousands. Information about two Classroom Instruction study group products went online nationally to more than 10,000 subscribers to the General Education Network services of GTE. In the July 5, 1990, issue of "Teacher Talk Update," a publication transmitted electronically on the network, highlights of the Kentucky Education Association (KEA)-AEL Drawing Marginal Learners Into the Big Picture and the Tennessee Education Association (TEA)-AEL Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher Handbook study group publications and information concerning their availability were provided to the subscribers. The Education Network serves educational administrators, teachers, each state department of education, and every school district in Tennessee and Texas. Usage is also described as "heavy" in Kentucky and Virginia. Thanks to the wonders of technology, AEL's study group products are impacting educators nationwide.

AEL helps school district improve community involvement. The Hart County School District was one of the original four test sites for the School-Community Improvement Process. After conducting a needs assessment conference, a steering committee and study groups synthesized the conference report and identified improved community involvement in the schools as the goal to be addressed in a school improvement project. The project plan included the development of an instrument to measure community involvement, an inservice program for all staff regarding community involvement, $200 grants to each school to implement an activity to improve parent involvement, and $50 grants to teachers with plans to conduct an activity to improve involvement of parents in the activities of their classrooms. Pre- and postadministrations of the parental involvement survey found a statistically significant improvement in the parents' perceptions of their involvement with the schools.

Tennessee

Hundreds receive training in AEL workshops via ripple effect. Five consultants with the Tennessee Department of Education (TDE) were among 42 participants trained as trainers in the November 9-10, 1988, "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help Through Instruction and Policy" training-for-trainers workshop conducted by workshop developers Doug Fleming, education consultant, and Jane Hange, Classroom Instruction (CI) director, in Nashville under the sponsorship of the department and seven educator associations. Betty Woods, TDE consultant, with assistance from other participants trained at this CI-School Governance and Administration collaborative event, then presented seven training-for-trainers replications across the state during the first quarter of FY 89. Through her efforts, an additional 250 participants are now conducting "Marginal Learners" workshops for their schools, districts, and associations. Woods submitted evaluation data for these day-long training-for-trainers events and for two additional workshops on the topic to AEL for analysis. Four additional AEL School Excellence Workshops were presented by AEL staff, consultants, and workshop developers for TDE staff and others between November 1987 and January 1989. For each of these, TDE staff followed up by presenting several regional training-for-trainers workshops, which trained more than 678 local educators to conduct workshops for their faculties. "Effective Questioning," "School Climate," "At-Risk Students: The Dropout Problem," and "Community Support Through Public Relations" were the topics of these AEL training-for-trainers events. AEL continued to provide training-for-trainers workshops in Tennessee.

Tennessee program incorporates AEL school climate materials. In Tennessee, the State Department of Education convened its staff, along with representatives of the Tennessee Education Association, the Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration, the Tennessee School Boards Association, the Tennessee LEAD project, and the Tennessee Association for Colleges of Teacher Education, to select workshop topics and to plan the collaborative training-for-trainers events. AEL's strategy of "working with and through" other associations has proven successful. For example, as a result of these collaborations, the department replicated AEL workshops throughout the state, each year training hundreds of Tennessee educators. The department printed AEL's training notebooks, coordinated arrangements with the training site, and supported meals for participants and some hotel costs. The Department of Education incorporated one entire portion of the AEL workshop on "School Climate" into a statewide program called Positive Attitudes in Tennessee Schools.

Forum enlightens policymakers and educators on funding equity issue. In the summer of 1988, 66 rural school districts in Tennessee sued the state, contending that the reliance on local sales tax revenues to fund K-12 education was unconstitutional. In August, at the invitation of the Chief State School Officer, the Policy and Planning Center convened a group of 23 policymakers and key education association representatives for a Center-sponsored forum. Kern Alexander, distinguished professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and a noted scholar of education finance, met with the group and discussed issues involved in restructuring school finance systems to achieve equity. In a post-event evaluation of the meeting, in which 83 percent of the participants responded within three weeks of the meeting, all said the event gave them "opportunities for discussion" to obtain "a frame of reference for judging such activity in their own state." They reported having already used information from the event "as input to legislative committees," as "background for the current court case" or "as input to revision of the formula." Following the meeting, Alexander prepared, for the Center's series of policy issue papers, a Review of Public School Finance in the Appalachia Educational Laboratory States. The paper was the focus of the lead story, "State Education Finance Systems Inequitable, Immoral, and Illegal," in the August 1990 issue of the R & D Preview magazine.

AEL-TACTE conducts two national surveys on minorities in teacher-training programs. The Tennessee Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (TACTE) and AEL's Professional Preparation and Research (PP&R) program established a study group that involved 12 faculty members from 10 TACTE-member institutions. Its purpose was to implement an R & D-based approach to solving a problem that plagues Tennessee and the nation--the dearth of minorities in teacher-training programs. The study group first undertook a national survey (1) to identify existing programs that are effective in recruiting/retaining minority students and (2) to determine the characteristics of these successful programs. By dividing the labor and using modem communications technology, the study group completed its survey and published its findings in less than three months. This 207-page report, titled *Programs of Promise: A Summary of Current Programs Focusing on the Recruitment of Minority Candidates to Careers in Professional Education*, has proven useful to institutions in Tennessee and across the nation. But its publication was only one part of this study group's ambitious plan.

In the fall of 1990, the TACTE/PP&R study group is completing a second survey of TACTE-member institutions. Having already determined the number, size, and success of minority recruitment and retention programs at TACTE-member institutions in 1988 to establish a baseline, the 1990 survey will show what change has occurred. A sizable increase is expected, and while the surveys won't provide causal data, study group members are sure that their efforts had a significant impact.

AEL resources reach thousands in Tennessee. A summary of Resource Center FY 86-90 evaluation forms showed that, yearly, 20 percent of the Center's Tennessee clients were first-time users. New clients were also generated through AEL's newsletter. *The Link* mailing list records show a substantial growth in readers in Tennessee. During 1986-90, Tennessee *Link* readers have increased nearly five times. According to responses supplied in the 1990 *Link* readership survey, the average Tennessee reader shared *The Link* with *19* other persons. As a result, *each issue* had the potential to reach approximately 20,000 educators in Tennessee.

Virginia

Virginia association published a "Who's Who" of training presenters for AEL School Excellence Workshops. In May 1990, the Virginia Education Association (VEA) published *Connecting with Students: A Way Through the Maze, Training Opportunities from the Virginia Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory*. This 55-page description of the seven AEL School Excellence Workshops jointly sponsored as training-for-trainers events by VEA and AEL since 1987, along with participant contact information for the 40 VEA members who were trained as trainers, was mailed to all VEA UniServ directors (42), distributed at the July 1990 VEA Leadership School (100), and mailed to VEA representatives in each school in Virginia. A total printing and dissemination of more than 2,000 copies has resulted in information available to each faculty about AEL training replications and who can conduct them.

Conversations with best and brightest packaged in videos. In a collaborative effort between AEL and the Virginia Center for Educational Leadership (VCEL), 50 educators participated in a series of four video-teleconferences. During each conference--designed to stimulate personal and professional leadership growth--administrators gathered to discuss key concepts in a specific book they had read on the topic of leadership.

Because of the use of satellite television, these discussions included not only the other participants, but also the book's author. Because the participants were so enthusiastic about their experiences, AEL and VCEL decided to package these experiences for wider distribution. The two agencies jointly developed a Facilitator's Guide, Conversations with the Best and the Brightest: Leading the Way to Excellence. This guide and the accompanying four videotapes, in which the authors respond to a number of questions, will be distributed to all 140 divisions in Virginia. VCEL and AEL will train facilitators in the use of the guide through a series of regional training workshops.

Timely, relevant policy papers get broad distribution in Virginia. A couple of the Policy and Planning Center's issue papers were particularly relevant to topics facing decisionmakers in Virginia and were broadly distributed by the State Department of Education. One, Prekindergarten Programs in Public Schools: A National and State Review, was published shortly after the 1986 Governor's Commission on Education Excellence came out with a recommendation that supported public school programs for four year olds. The Center supplied the department with 300 copies of the paper to distribute to state board members, General Assembly members, and citizens serving on special legislatively created task forces studying the issue. The department also gave copies of the paper to school divisions interested in establishing state-supported pilot programs. The second paper, Effective Practices and Structures for Middle Grades Education, was developed at the request of Virginia. The state launched a restructuring of middle grades education in 1988 with identification of model vanguard schools. In 1990, the department requested 550 copies of the paper to provide to teams from all school divisions attending a special summer seminar on the middle grades restructuring effort. Given the large number requested, Center staff supplied the department with a camera-ready master for duplication and distribution.

Unique conference links practitioners with instructional researchers. In collaboration with Roanoke City Public Schools and the Center for Cognitive Teaching at Radford University, AEL sponsored two innovative symposia for practitioners. "Making Connections" was the theme of the symposia, which were held in Roanoke in 1989 and 1990. Symposia presenters, nationally known experts in teaching/learning, were challenged to present the merits of their respective programs in addressing practitioners' most difficult problems: attending to student motivation, teaching higher order thinking skills, and meeting the needs of at-risk children. In 1990, pairs of experts including Joseph Campione, Nancy Karweit, Matthew Lipman, and Annemarie Palincsar worked with the practitioners--and with each other--to make connections between the problem areas and their R & D work. Practitioners (400 in the two years) reported that they found the conference format a very exciting professional development activity. Presenters, too, found the format a useful way to communicate with and learn from practitioners and each other.

Involving community really pays off for Virginia school district. The Charlotte County School District was one of the original four test sites for the School-Community Improvement Process. After conducting a needs assessment conference, the steering committee and study groups synthesized the conference report and identified the construction of a new building for the middle school as the goal toward which they would work. The Rural, Small Schools program provided the money for a feasibility study that was conducted by an architectural firm with the condition that it relate the study to the middle school curriculum to be implemented. Public support for the project was generated by the AEL School-Community Improvement Process, as well as the involvement of faculty, school board, and community members in the feasibility study. This support encouraged the county commission to authorize the school board to apply for a low-interest loan from the state that could save the community over $6 million during the life of the bonds. The chair of the steering committee, a local banker, claims that such approval would not have been possible without the assistance of AEL and the School-Community Improvement Process.

West Virginia

Classroom volunteers from business/industry free teachers for computer training. Project TEACH (Teach Everyong About Computers Here), a collaborative project between the Kanawha County Schools and the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce and Development designed to release teachers to attend computer training by preparing and scheduling business representatives as half-day volunteer teachers, was a recipient of the 1989 President's Award for Private Sector Initiatives. Classroom Instruction (CI) staff have chaired the Project's Lesson Planning Committee since the project's creation in 1987. In this capacity, program staff provided information resources for the volunteer packet, designed to acquaint the business person with lesson ideas, student characteristics, and tips for having a successful three-hour lesson. CI staff have also planned, presented with the Committee, and evaluated 12 volunteer orientations; created sections of the volunteer packet; conducted Project TEACH lessons; and assisted in the final development of print and video portions of the Project TEACH Kit, now marketed nationally to districts and businesses. During each of the four years of implementation, Project TEACH trained representatives from more than 100 companies to conduct more than 500 sessions for between 8,000 and 10,000 students. Through Project TEACH, teachers in more than 70 elementary schools in the district had the opportunity to receive a microcomputer for their class and to attend two computer training sessions after school and two with release time. Project TEACH will continue to function providing teachers with released time to upgrade skills and saving the district more than $40,000 annually in substitute teacher costs.

Instructional time study affects state board decision. After the West Virginia Association of School Administrators-AEL study group on the use of instructional time completed a comprehensive survey of teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the best use of time in teaching the basic subject areas to first and second grade children, the West Virginia Board of Education removed the requirements of "minutes per day" in instruction specified by subject area.

AEL helps West Virginia decisionmakers take a fresh look at class size issue. A successful strategy for the Policy and Planning Center has been the convening of small groups of state decisionmakers for highly relevant discussion of timely issues, typically with an outside guest expert who brings a national perspective. In 1989, some West Virginia legislative leaders raised the possibility of increasing class size limits in the state. The discussion was that any savings that resulted could be used for teacher pay raises, something teachers had done without for three years. Emotion was running high. The Policy and Planning Center was asked to help. At the request of the Chief State School Officer, the Center sponsored a forum on class size. In its search for an appropriate expert presenter, the Center learned that Doug Mitchell of the University of California at Riverside was just completing a reanalysis of the class size research literature. He was contacted and brought by the Center to West Virginia to discuss his findings and their implications for policy with 40 West Virginia decisionmakers, including the Chief State School Officer, key state department staff, chairmen of the House and Senate education committees, and other legislators, state board members, and representatives of various education associations. The Center was viewed as the third-party, impartial partner in the effort to "begin the dialogue" as one legislator said. Mitchell's remarks were subsequently summarized in the Center's "Policy Briefs" publication and shared widely with educators throughout the Region. A master copy of the issue was also requested by the policy staff at the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory for distribution to educators in its region.

AEL research report on rural schools gets the attention of state board members. Another AEL research report was in the news. The West Virginia Special Task Force on Rural School Districts selected the multi-state study report, A Demographic Study of Rural, Small School Districts in Four Appalachian States, authored by Merrill L. Meehan, to support partially its proposal to the state board for revised school funding ratios. Meehan's research identified one measure of "ruralness" as the number of students per square mile. The task force used this information to propose the 25 school districts in West Virginia having fewer than 10 pupils per square mile be designated "rural." Currently, rural counties in West Virginia receive the same amount of money per student as other counties in the state; fewer dollars, therefore, are available for educational services in those counties with fewer students. The task force informed state school board members of the difficulties rural schools are encountering due to this situation. The Charleston Daily Mail reported that state school officials and school board members were not only impressed by the report but "shocked" at the disparities it brought into focus.

SECTION B: BEST COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS: 1986-90

The purpose of this section is to provide descriptions of the Laboratory's outstanding collaborative efforts. The method for selecting items for inclusion in this section was to ask the seven project directors to identify the best collaborative efforts from the perspective of their individual projects.

AEL/National Education Association Mastery in Learning Project Collaboration

Classroom Instruction (CI) staff were integrally involved with the National Education Association's Mastery in Learning (MIL) project since its inception in 1985. In addition to providing technical assistance in the form of information resources, special topic workshops, training-for-trainers workshop participation, and annual opportunities to showcase school projects in the CI insert to The Link for the five MIL schools in AEL's Region (1-Kentucky, 2-Tennessee, 2-Virginia), CI staff assisted project directors and staff in conference planning, documentation and evaluation planning, provision of resources to the project's subject files, and analysis of findings across schools and paper presentations.

CI staff also served as the Parent Involvement Researcher Site on the MIL School Renewal Network, an electronic network in which 58 sites (26 MIL schools and other schools, Labs, and universities involved in restructuring) input research information and share practice examples around nine educational topics. The collaboration with the MIL project has benefited AEL through loaned computer hardware, modem, and printer; software and training in electronic communications; partial reimbursement for staff time for Parent Involvement Researcher Site responsibilities; presentation opportunities in national conferences; and connections with faculties involved in restructuring within the Region and throughout the country. The experience staff have gained through the MIL School Renewal Network will be important to creating the AEL Restructuring Schools Network proposed to link innovative educators across electronic networks.

AEL/Leadership in Educational Administration Development Collaboration

Since the creation of Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) projects in each state four years ago, the School Governance and Administration program has promoted collaboration among the four LEAD centers within the Region by sponsoring regional meetings, attending the national LEAD meetings, and networking with regional LEAD centers at those meetings, and through interagency projects. Two of these projects deserve special mention.

1. "Targets for Trainers" underscores the value of successful collaboration. Two OERI federally funded projects (the Kentucky LEAD Center and AEL) worked together to develop and field test workshop materials for trainers of adults. A competitive grant from the Kraft Foundation enabled some extensive revisions and dissemination. Subsequently, the training package has been offered in areas served by four Regional Educational Laboratories to more than 130 state trainers. Three states have requested statewide presentations, and the National School Boards Association used "Targets" to train representatives from all 50 state associations.

2. In a collaborative effort between AEL and the Virginia Center for Educational Leadership (VCEL), 50 educators participated in a series of four videoteleconferences. During each conference--designed to stimulate personal and professional leadership growth--administrators gathered to discuss key concepts in a book they had read on the topic of leadership. Because of the use of satellite television, these discussions included not only the other participants, but also the book's author. Because the participants were so enthusiastic about their experiences, AEL and VCEL decided to package these activities so they could be more widely distributed. The two agencies jointly developed a Facilitator's Guide, Conversations with the Best and the Brightest: Leading the Way to Excellence. This guide and the accompanying four videotapes, in which the authors respond to a number of questions, will be distributed to all 140 divisions in the state of Virginia. VCEL and AEL will train facilitators in the use of the guide through a series of regional training workshops.

AEL's participation with the National LEAD Network has been helpful to clients in this Region. One example stems from AEL's work with the LEAD Study Group on Restructuring in which the select seminar was introduced as a strategy. AEL worked with the West Virginia School Boards Association--for the West Virginia Legislature Oversight Committee--in bringing together 50 key people from across the state to discuss restructuring local schools and school boards. At AEL's suggestion, the National Network retained consultant Pat Krysinski to lead the group in a modified version of AEL's select seminar to investigate restructuring.

AEL/Regional Educational Laboratories Networking Collaboration

The network of Task 3 project directors initiated by OERI under Task 5, collaboration with others, proved to be an invaluable benefit to the work of AEL's Policy and Planning Center. The network has given Center staff many of the same kinds of opportunities that Center forums have given the Region's policymakers--small-group, one-on-one discussions of timely issues of concern to the participants. Beyond that, it has exposed Center staff to a network of professionals who work in and study education policymaking, such as the staffs of the National Governors' Association, National Association of State Boards of Education, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Conference of State Legislators, Center for Education Policy Research, Institute for Educational Leadership, and the Education Commission of the States. Center staff have called on the professional relationships begun as a result of the small-group interactions for help in identifying guest experts for forum presentations, consultant writers for policy issue papers, or the latest resources to answer a client's request for assistance.

The network has all the characteristics of a collaborative endeavor: perception of need, clear purpose, mutuality of interests, involvement of the key people, readiness for shared decisionmaking, ability of the participants to make commitments, and clarity of the requirements of the participants. Collaboration has also occurred at various levels: information exchange (we all now automatically share our policy-related publications with each other); resource sharing (other Labs have requested master copies of AEL issue papers or "Policy Briefs" for distribution in their own regions, and AEL has done the same); joint development (network contacts led Policy and Planning Center staff to seek out joint publication of Center issue papers with the university-based policy centers operating in our Region); and leadership and coordination (SEIL served as the lead Lab for the Task 3 network early in the contract, but when funding cutbacks necessitated its giving up that responsibility, the policy staffs at the other Laboratories took turns organizing meetings to keep the group going).

The Task 3 policy directors have developed as a support network; the professional support made possible by the Task 5 collaborative effort enhances the work of all Labs.

AEL Assists States to Plan Education Reform Initiatives

AEL collaborated with the West Virginia Governor's Office, the secretary for education and the arts, the State Department of Education, and the chief executive officers of two prominent local businesses to design a statewide conference on educational reform. This conference set the stage for the development of a reform package the governor presented to a special session of the legislature in June 1990. Later, at the governor's request, AEL collaborated with many other state education organizations, businesses, and community groups to staff the conference as facilitators or resource persons. The conference attracted more than 700 West Virginia citizens and was followed by nine town meetings held in various sites across the state. AEL staff served as facilitators and resource persons at the town meetings, as well.

AEL, Tennessee Technological University, and Tennessee Valley Authority Collaborate to Improve Community Involvement

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program participated in a collaborative project with the Tennessee Technological University (Tennessee Tech) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to conduct a regional adaptation of the AEL School-Community Improvement Process. Eight school districts in the Upper Cumberland Region of Tennessee were involved in a project titled "A Regional Approach to Rural Education and Training Improvement for Economic and Community Development."

The RSS program assisted staff from Tennessee Tech and TVA in adapting the procedures of the School-Community Improvement Process for this regional replication. RSS staff provided technical assistance by conducting a needs assessment conference, providing orientation to the steering committee, acting as consultants at each meeting of the steering committee and study groups, and assisting in the design of the school improvement program.

Among the regional needs identified by the needs assessment conference, and confirmed by later study group meetings, were high dropout rate, negative self-image, and lack of community and parental involvement in education in the Upper Cumberland Region. It was determined that a cooperative public relations program would best address these issues. Tennessee Tech identified a faculty member with expertise in public relations to conduct a series of training sessions for faculties from each of the participating schools. TVA provided funding for these sessions. The outcome of the project was a group of schools cooperating, through quality public relations programs, on addressing the needs identified earlier.

SECTION C: INSIGHTS ABOUT WHAT WORKS AND BARRIERS

The purpose of this section is to provide descriptions of the insights AEL has gained during the FY 86-90 contract period about things that work and about things that impede progress. The method for selecting these items for inclusion was to ask the seven project directors to identify one successful practice and one barrier to success from the perspective of their individual projects.

Successful Practices

The following descriptions were provided by AEL project directors in response to the question: "What was your most successful practice during the contract period?"

Working With and Through Professional Associations of Teachers

The Classroom Instruction (CI) program had the task of reaching, through awareness information, workshops, study groups, or technical assistance, a potential of 160,000 teachers in 539 school districts. The difficulties inherent in accomplishing this task with a staff of two professionals and one support staff member are obvious. Leveraging assistance from organizations and agencies that have responsibility and interest in improving professional development opportunities for teachers was the strategy found most effective in linking teachers with research-based information to improve teaching and learning.

During 1986-90, AEL responded to the OERI charge to work with and through associations to increase impact of services. By working with and through the state affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA), the association of largest teacher membership in each state of AEL's Region, the Classroom Instruction program has reached thousands of teachers. CI staff can reach through newsletter articles, for example, 77 percent of Kentucky teachers (31,632 total Kentucky Education Association members), 83 percent of Tennessee teachers (44,500 total Tennessee Education Association members), 78 percent of Virginia teachers (47,598 total Virginia Education Association members), and 67 percent of West Virginia teachers (16,000 total West Virginia Education Assocation members). Collaboration with teacher associations led to more than 40 newsletter and journal articles on AEL and CI or using CI-provided information. An example of this is the "R & D Notes" column that appears in each issue of the Tennessee Education Association's Tennessee Teacher, read by more than 44,500 members for the last three years.

By recognizing the mutually beneficial goal of improving professional development opportunities for teachers, NEA state affiliates in the Region and AEL's CI program strengthened instruction-related services to teachers. Collaboration with teacher associations resulted in the association distribution of more than 9,600 copies of publications by study groups of teachers cosponsored by the state affiliates and AEL (total of 18 FY 86-90 products currently disseminated). Collaboration with teacher associations enabled the dissemination of more than 20,000 packets (of the 26,935 total packets distributed by CI in FY 87-90) of information on AEL and CI services and products to teachers in association-sponsored events throughout the Region. Collaboration with teacher associations led to the training of teachers as trainers for faculties throughout the Region and resulted in replications of AEL School Excellence Workshops within association conferences in each state. Collaboration with teacher associations involved all CI Program Advisory Committee members in AEL/CI awareness presentations for their colleagues in association events. Collaboration with teacher associations resulted in presentations by CI staff for each state affiliate and other important NEA-related and other organizations. Collaboration resulted in reliance on AEL for information responses, training, study groups, and technical assistance. This interdependence benefitted both parties, but clearly led to impact with CI's primary audience, classroom teachers.

Working With and Through Professional Associations of Administrators and School Board Members

The School Governance and Administration (SGA) program, like other AEL programs, has used the "working with and through" strategy very successfully over the past five years. Two successful practices have comprised the SGA service delivery work: study groups and training-for-trainers workshops.

AEL has conducted study groups (18- to 24-month projects) in each state in collaboration with administrators' associations, school boards' associations, and LEAD centers during the five-year contract period. The SGA program has involved more than 250 people in study group work. One example of this kind of collaborative effort is the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA)-AEL Study Group on Beginning Principals. During the study, KASA and AEL jointly wrote and conducted interviews of first-year principals, analyzed the responses, and planned an institute for beginning principals based on the results. KASA has just completed its third annual Beginning Principals' Institute. Each year since the study began, at least 60 first-time principals have attended the event, held the day before the KASA annual conference.

Having school administrators and others participate in conducting short-term research is seen as a good professional staff development experience for those who participate. At the beginning of the contract, SGA staff did not know if it was possible to do this successfully and, if so, with what results.

Another successful practice is the development and conducting of training-for-trainers workshops. AEL has developed 16 School Excellence Workshop packages that are presented in each state following the annual

Potpourri at which AEL workshops are previewed by educators from the administrators' and teachers' professional associations in each state. During the 60-month contract period of FY 86-89, AEL staff conducted 44 training-for-trainers events in which a total of 1,419 trainers were trained. These AEL-trained trainers conducted a total of 590 replication events that included a total of 18,361 participants over the 60-month contract period.

Timely Topics, Small-Group Format Spell Success With Region's Policymakers

The forums sponsored by the Policy and Planning Center have been a successful strategy for getting information to policymakers that they can use in their decisionmaking. Envisioned in the original proposal as an event that would involve only members of the Center Advisory Committee, the program has expanded the forums in recognition of the high degree of flexibility required to serve the information needs of policymakers.

The forums can now follow one of several formats to accommodate either a regional or an in-state focus. While the format options have evolved as clients have requested variations to meet immediate needs, all formats are responsive to a common theme--the convening of small groups of policymakers for focused, in-depth, one-on-one discussions of timely issues. Format options requested by Council members throughout the five years have included:

- Council members discussing an identified topic among themselves;
- an expert presenter meeting with Council members to explore an issue of interest;
- the Chief State School Officer of the host state inviting other policymakers in his/her state to join the Council members as they meet with a guest expert to discuss a topic of interest (AEL's quarterly Board meetings rotate among the four member states, so that a different Chief is host each quarter); and
- a meeting between a guest expert and key decisionmakers within one state to explore an issue of interest at a time other than a quarterly Council meeting.

The forum strategy of convening small groups of policymakers has been shown to give participants an opportunity for one-on-one sharing in an atmosphere that allows for informal and in-depth interaction. Discussion can expose the complexities of a problem or issue, increase awareness of policy options, and stimulate reflection on issues.

Cognizant of the literature on policymakers' use of information, Center staff developed an innovative process for eliciting participant reactions to and examples of information uses from the events. Called a post-event assessment, response rates typically hover around 80 percent.

Further, a high number of respondents (average of 77 percent) report having already used the information in some way, including:

- to initiate policy discussions,
- as input to an ad hoc committee,
- as a framework for thinking,
- for preparation of the governor's education proposals, and
- rewrote the state law.

Through its forums, the Center has come to be viewed and used by its clients as an impartial third party--one that is interested in the improvement of education but is outside the political entrappings of any one state. Evaluative information--obtained both through the post-event process and through telephone interviews with participants--demonstrates that the meetings have led to a reconceptualization of issues, have stimulated reflection about particular problems, have helped produce a collective understanding of timely topics, have shaken some preconceptions about problems, and have led to a consensual undertaking on the part of those involved.

Focus Group Interviewing

Focus group interviewing is a popular data collection technique that has been used widely in marketing research since the 1950s. Focus groups involve 10-15 preselected persons in a relatively unstructured sharing of opinions and feelings about a product or service. Focus groups are led by trained moderators, last one-two hours, and are usually taped for later analysis. Applications of the methodology in educational research and evaluation have been minimal. However, AEL staff have formal training in focus group interviewing and have been using it successfully as a data collection strategy. For example, staff used an adaptation of the strategy with the AEL Network of Schools. Members with experience/ interest in cooperative learning joined in a one-hour conference call that was conducted as a focus group interview. Participants shared their experiences and perceptions of cooperative learning with others; they asked and answered questions about a packet of articles on the topic sent previously by the Lab. AEL recorded the call and sent a summary of it to all Network members. This adaptation of focus group interviewing proved to be a cost effective way for AEL to support those from the Region using cooperative learning and to inform others about their experiences, as well as about research and evaluation studies on the topic.

Involving Citizens in the Systematic Improvement of Rural Schools

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program School-Community Improvement Process included a technique to help the steering committee design a project to address the educational need they selected from the needs generated by the assessment conference. The committee would appoint a temporary working group of six to eight persons to examine the literature to design an activity that might work to address that need. RSS staff provided the working group with documents from ERIC, the National Diffusion Network, and other sources of information about successful practices related to the need under consideration. After sending these materials to working group members, RSS staff met with the group to discuss and help them understand the research and activities described in the materials. The ultimate goal of the working group was to design an intervention or project based upon the research and development information they had received. All four test sites successfully completed this process and the working groups designed projects and submitted their plans to the steering committees.

The most important insight gained from this work is that lay persons in the rural communities can understand and use R & D information when making decisions. Most educators do not provide such information to their parents and community members because of the conventional wisdom that only educators can understand the jargon and complex ideas in educational literature. This is not so! In one site, the working group came to the first meeting after receiving their materials with notes and markings on their copies. They had prepared to discuss the materials better than would many graduate classes. In another site, a lay person from the working group reported their deliberations to the steering committee and used educational terminology such as "school climate" and "parental involvement" accurately and with ease.

Barriers to Success

AEL project directors were asked to describe the greatest barriers they encountered in carrying out their work during the 1986-90 contract period. Their responses follow.

Region's Topography and Settlement Patterns Make Travel Difficult

Distance from AEL to schools, district central offices, association headquarters, state departments of education, etc., all contributed to an "out of sight, out of mind" syndrome among educators that AEL must continually strive to overcome. Distance escalated travel costs for direct technical assistance, training, and study group meetings, events essential to the Classroom Instruction (CI) program's goal of improving professional development for teachers. Distance complicated following up on workshops by AEL-trained presenters, reminding study group members of meetings and assisting with task completion, encouraging information requesting and dissemination of AEL and cosponsored products by association staff, and opening doors to AEL services for those new to their Regional Lab. In response to this barrier, staff employed a variety of techniques to sustain relationships, the bottom line to involving educators in the improvement of professional development opportunities.

By maintaining phone and correspondence links, daily checking and responding to electronic bulletin board requests, and maximizing contacts on travel to a particular area, CI staff attempted to create high visibility for AEL and CI projects. Through continuity of CI staff and successful programs, familiarity with AEL services was established and reliance on individuals to assist with questions and requests was fostered. By using regular evaluation of program strategies conducted with key clients by evaluators external to the program, CI staff were able to monitor the match between program goals and strategies and the needs of practitioners.

Additionally, the teacher representatives on AEL's Board, all members of the CI Program Advisory Committee (PAC), ensured that CI workshop and study group topic and format choices reflected teacher needs and preferences in their states. CI PAC members also provided direct services in the field on behalf of AEL and CI, such as awareness sessions, updates on AEL and CI events and products for association Board meetings, announcement of AEL services in school and association newsletters, and provision of information requests and requested information for teacher colleagues. Through the production of high quality study group publications that addressed instructional needs identified by association collaborators, CI staff were able to provide resources that well serve association needs in this area. Through followup mailings and by encouraging followup phone contacts to assist the training planning of AEL-trainer presenters and by requesting completed participant evaluation forms for workshop replications, CI staff were able to track the impact of training, but, more importantly, to ensure high quality professional development throughout the Region.

Matching Requirements of R & D Work With Clients' Schedules

Study groups have been successful, but there were limitations in their effectiveness and impact as follows:

1. Study groups required a large commitment of time. R & D studies required at least 18 to 24 months.
2. Only a limited number of educators could be involved at any given time.
3. It was difficult to maintain active participant involvement over the course of two years. People's time commitments and interests changed. Involvement required extra work for those who participated; there were limited rewards in their home-school districts for the amount of work involved.
4. Associations sometimes chose topics with political agendas--close to their hearts and interests.

In the last two years of the contract, School Governance and Administration staff took a more active role in identifying the potential topics for study groups. Staff wrote proposals for AEL Board members and associations' staff to consider. Through this approach, an effort was made to keep the focus predominantly on improving teaching and learning rather than on more peripheral concerns. This change has been well received by associations and AEL Board members (e.g., parent involvement, local school advisory councils at the secondary level, and QUILT).

AEL's Apolitical Stance Sometimes Places the Lab Outside the Policymaking Process

The Policy and Planning Center identified as its primary clients the Chief State School Officers of the member states. Secondary but equally important audiences were member of governors' staffs, heads of legislative education committees, and members of state boards of education. The designation of Chief State School Officer as the primary client did two things: It tied the Laboratory's work to the legally recognized entity empowered to oversee state K-12 education systems; it also sometimes put the Laboratory outside the realm of where education policy was being made. A good example is the recent massive change in Kentucky education. The reform package was designed and approved by the General Assembly and the governor's office working together. Professional educators in Kentucky--those with whom AEL had historical ties--were excluded from the decision-making structure or process. AEL's association with the Kentucky reform is most evident now, as the professional educators begin the task of implementation.

A strength of the Policy and Planning Center's work with state decisionmakers has been its impartial, third-party stance. AEL is viewed as a regionally-owned organization that is interested in the improvement of education but is outside the politics of any state. It is important that AEL maintain that position if it is to continue to enjoy the high level of trust associated with its services. So while the primary focus of services is on the Chief State School Officer, it is a position the Laboratory defends with confidence.

Setting Realistic Client Expectations

Many of the practitioners and policymakers who requested information services, consultation, or technical assistance from AEL were looking for "instant solutions" to educational problems. Overcoming the expectation that there are simple solutions to the complex problems of education was one of our greatest challenges as Lab staff. Over the years, staff became proficient in guiding most clients through a systematic problem-solving process that helped them define problems, as well as identify and test solutions. However, even when we were successful in getting the client through that process, there were other barriers, e.g., preparing for, implementing, maintaining, and evaluating the solution strategy selected. The "convene, catalyze, and follow through" theme that guided AEL's 1985-90 work has begun to help staff focus on and address this barrier. However, we need to continue to analyze how our many points of client contact (phone, correspondence, conferences, publications, and so forth) can be used to establish realistic expectations of AEL as a Regional Educational Laboratory—an R & D service provider.

Helping Clients Identify and Address Their Real Problems

The Rural, Small Schools program School-Community Improvement Process was not successful in one of the four test sites. Hancock County, Tennessee, had a well-attended needs assessment conference with about 30 citizens participating. However, when the steering committee held meetings, they were poorly attended. School staff, particularly principals, did not attend. The need selected was the improvement of community involvement in the schools. The project designed was the development and dissemination of a district newsletter to be distributed to all citizens in the county. The committee noted that the county had no newspaper to inform citizens of the events taking place in the schools. The media (television and newspapers) received in the county were all based in large towns and cities in the region. The media had little interest in the people and events in this small and remote school district. The newsletter was proposed as a way to interest the community in the activities and accomplishments of the schools.

Principals and other staff members did not cooperate in providing copy to generate a newsletter. The result was that none was ever assembled and distributed. The underlying reason for lack of interest in the school improvement project may best be seen in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The school staff were so concerned with the basic needs of survival that they had little interest or energy to spend on sophisticated ideas about school improvement. One elementary principal even borrowed $400 on a personal loan in order to buy toilet paper and other supplies needed to start school one year. Fund raising activities to get the money needed to survive as a school took staff energy that would normally be devoted to school improvement activities in more affluent schools.

The financial condition of many small, rural schools is a barrier to school improvement projects. If one were interested in selecting sites for such projects, an examination of the needs of proposed sites would be a priority. One should avoid schools with survival needs when looking for one to address higher level needs.

PART III

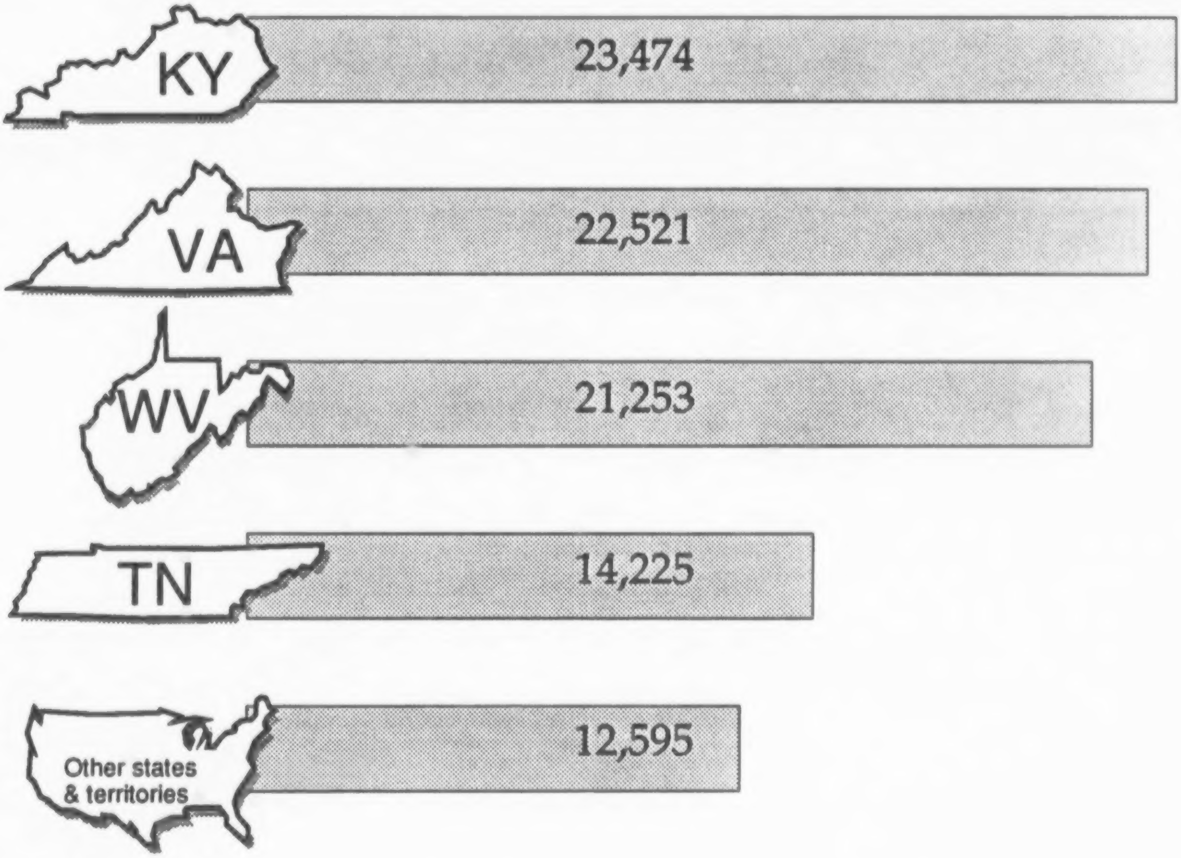
DATA ON CLIENTS, SERVICES, AND PRODUCTS FOR 1986-90

SECTION A: FREQUENCY TABULATIONS:
A FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY

During this contract period, AEL has provided OERI as part of each annual self-assessment report a graphic summary of numerical evaluation data collected by the programs and aggregated by the internal evaluator. These summaries have proven to be a useful mechanism for demonstrating the Laboratory's progress to other groups in addition to OERI. What follows is a graphic summary of numerical data for the entire contract period, FY 86-90.

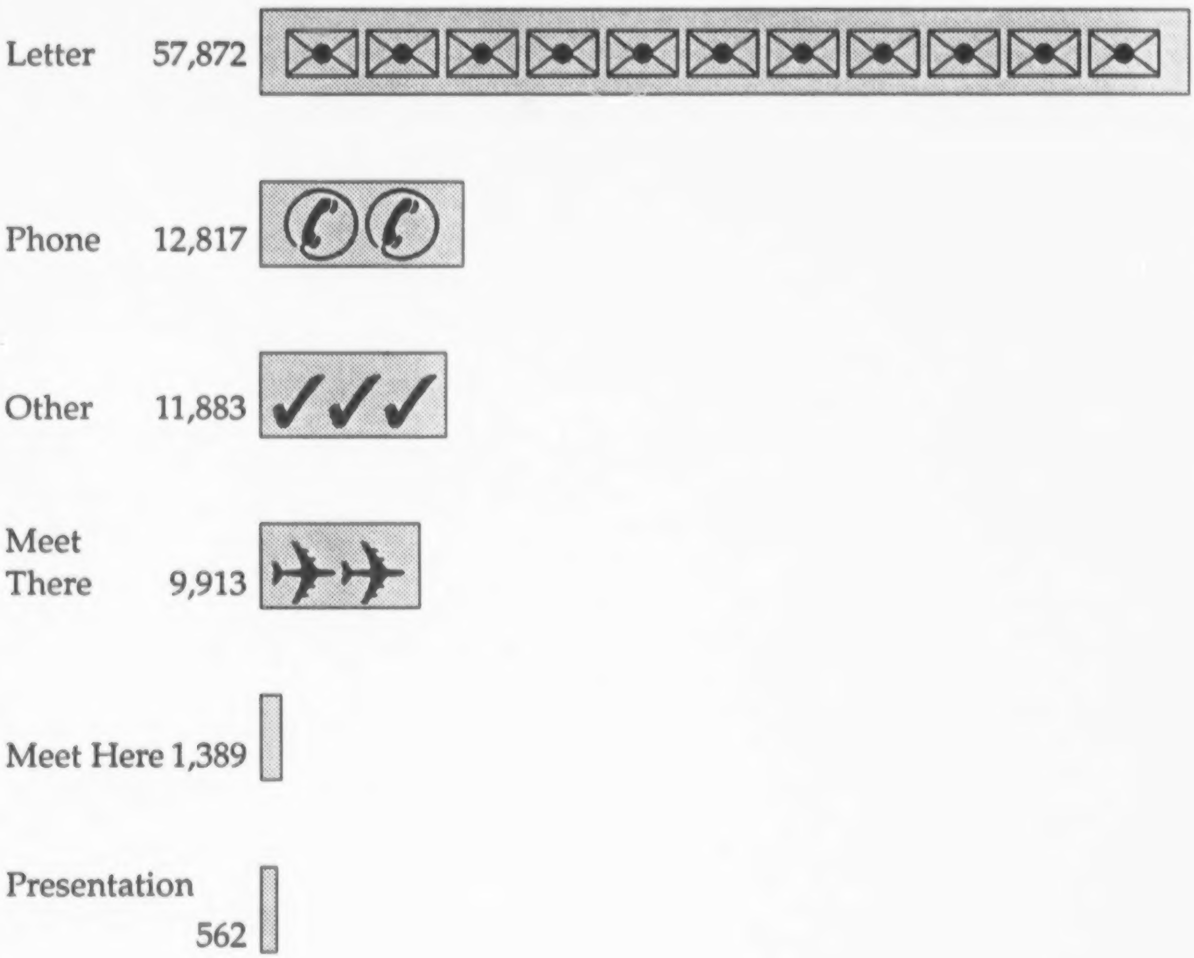
SELECTED DATA SUMMARIES

SUMMARY OF PERSONAL CONTACT RECORDS DATA FOR FY 86-90—BY STATE



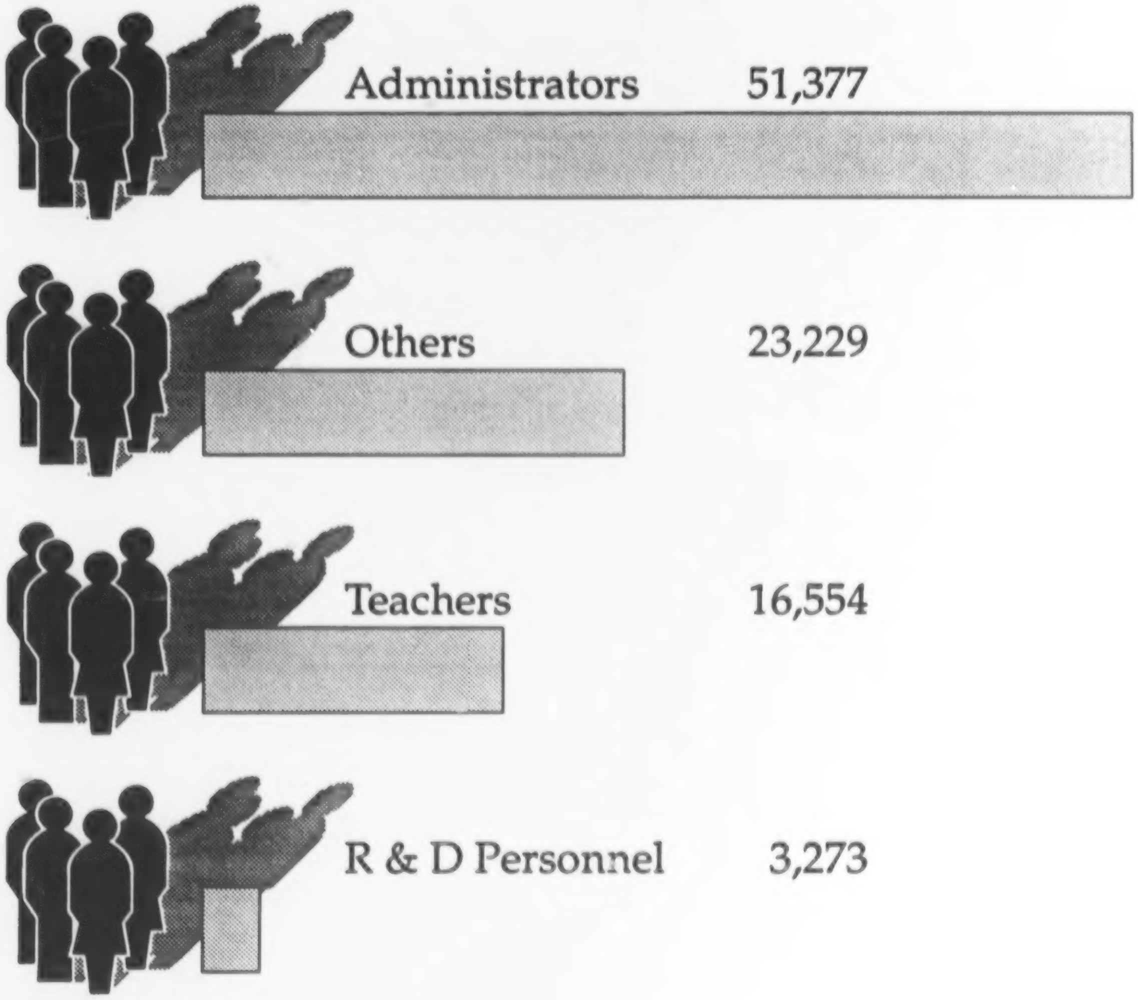
TOTAL CONTACTS FOR FY 86-90: OVER 94,000

SUMMARY OF PERSONAL CONTACT RECORDS DATA FOR FY 86-90—BY TYPE

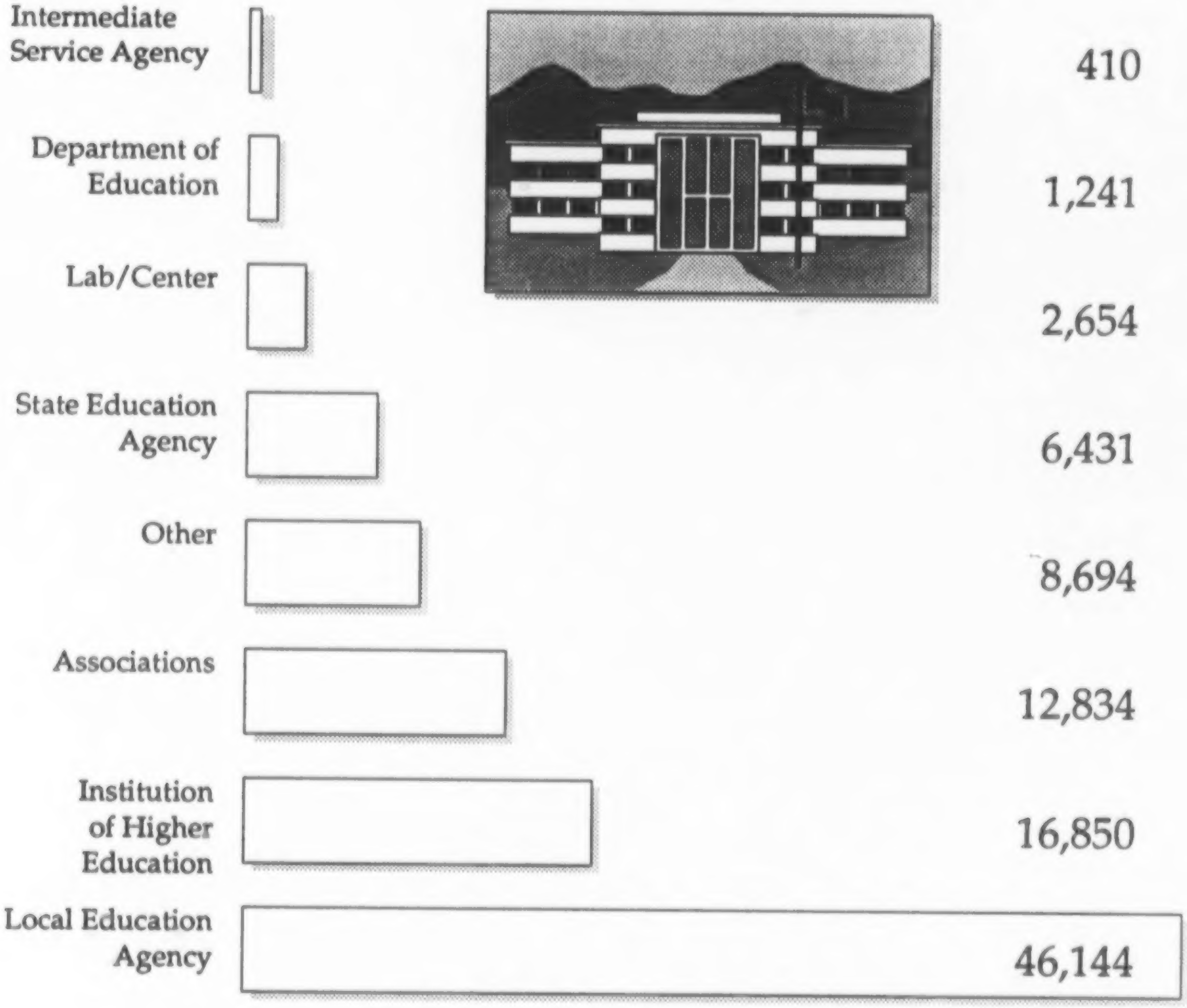


III-4

SUMMARY OF PERSONAL CONTACT RECORDS DATA FOR FY 86-90—BY POSITION



SUMMARY OF FY 89 PERSONAL CONTACT RECORDS DATA FOR FY 86-90—BY ORGANIZATION



INFORMATION SERVICES AND PUBLICATIONS

During FY 86-90 **65,800** documents were disseminated from the AEL Resource Center. Staff also provided **1,650** information searches.

27,981

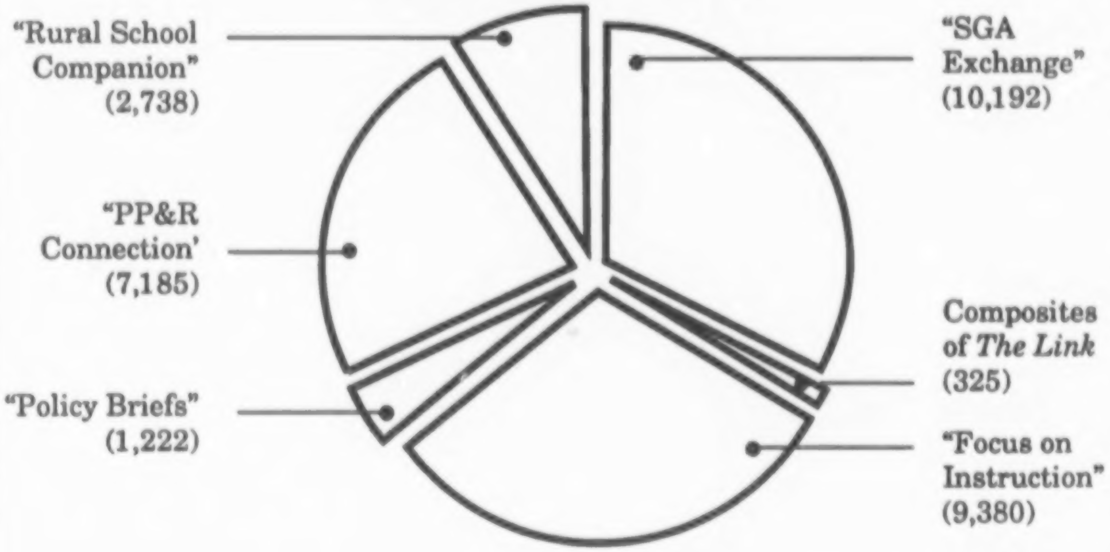
Sets of CSAP "blurbs" were mailed by AEL staff during FY 86-90. CSAP blurbs are one-page descriptions of research products packaged and labeled **R&D Notes.**

Distribution of The LINK

Total copies with audience-specific inserts for FY 86-90—

121,313

Insert breakdown for FY 90:



TRAINING AND SYMPOSIA

418 Participants attended five symposia in FY 86-90.

Educational Technology: Beyond The Micro

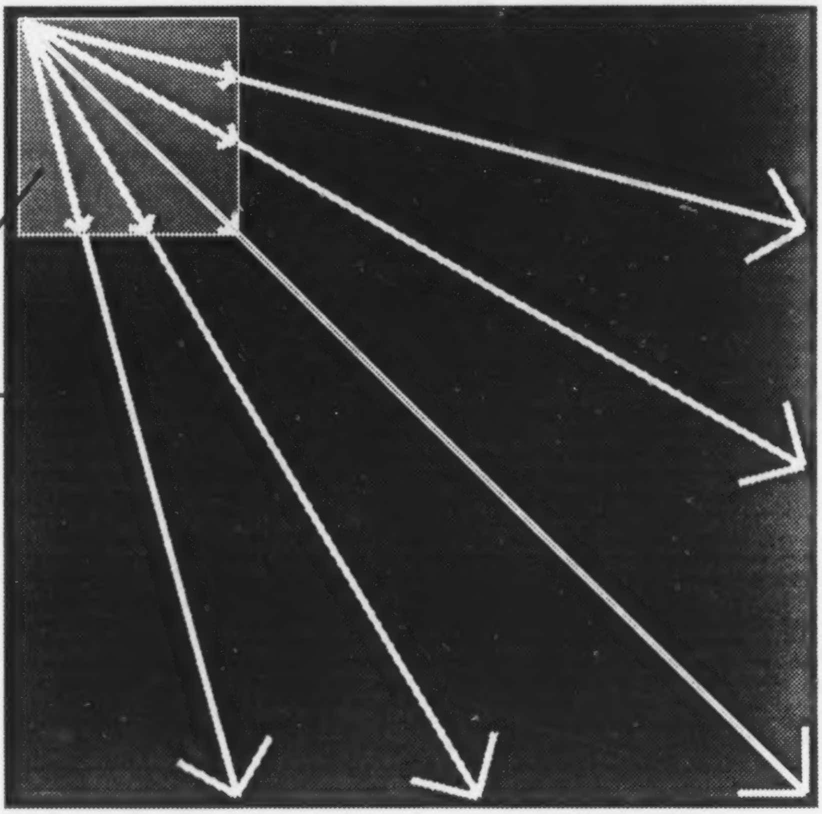
Preparing Youth for Jobs of the Future

Kentucky Education Reform Act

Risky Futures
Should State Policy Reflect Rural Diversity?

Our Children—Our Future
The Care and Education of Young Children

In
44
AEL School Excellence
Training-for-
Trainers events,
AEL staff trained
1,419
trainers
who trained
18,361
teachers,
administrators, and
other
educators in
590
events during the
60-month period
covered by the
FY 86-90 Workshop
Feedback Surveys.



Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools

160

Participants from 16 states and four RELs attended Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools: The Dollar Dilemma in FY 90.

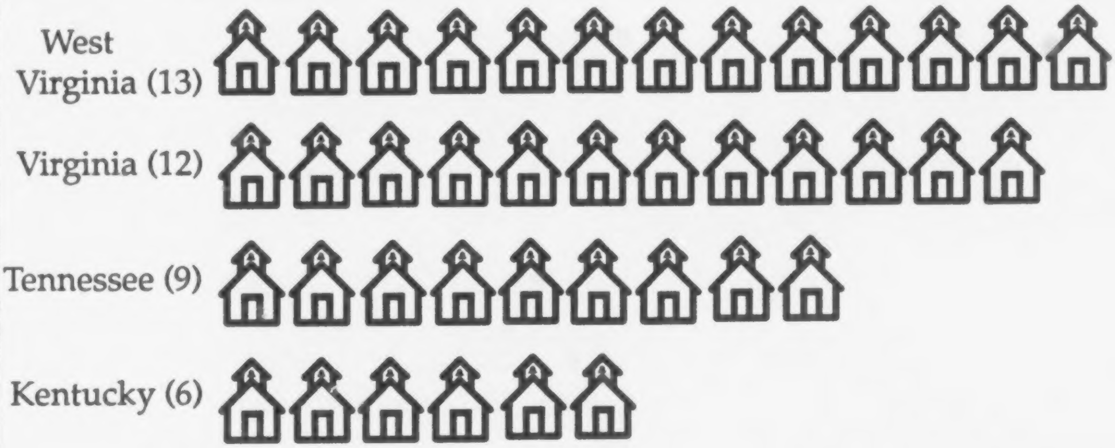
Nine papers were presented by school finance scholars. Summaries of the papers appeared in a special *Link* issue and the complete papers will appear in a special issue of the *Journal of Education Finance.*

COLLABORATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

AEL staff processed

15,014

WATS line calls for technical assistance during FY 86-90.

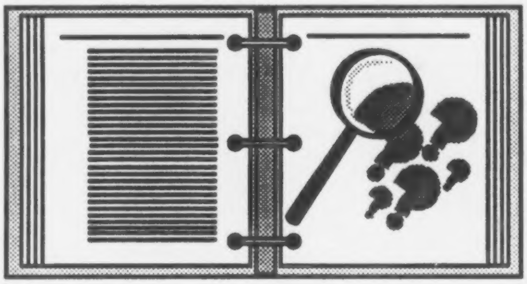


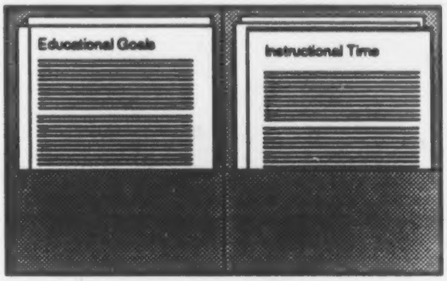
40

Schools and districts enrolled in the AEL Network of Schools during FY 86-90. AEL implemented the network in response to the needs and interests expressed by network members.

16

School Excellence Workshops were developed during FY 86-90



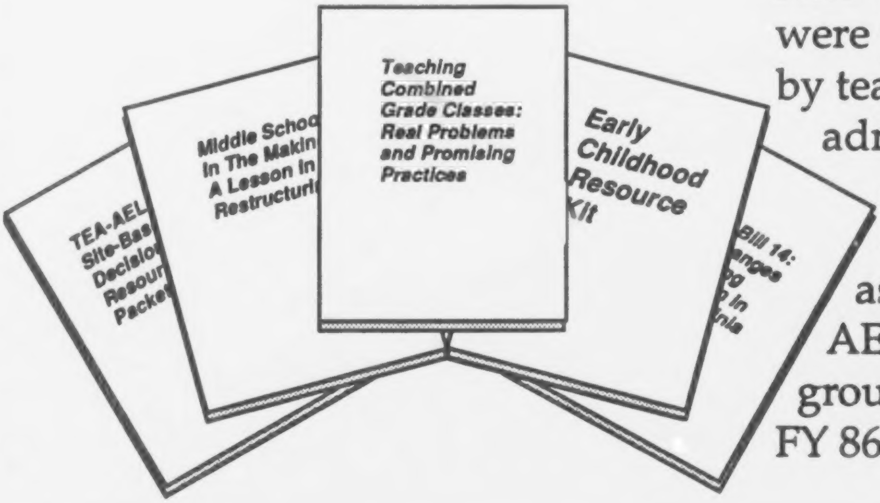


26,935

Information-type packets were distributed at various awareness sessions in the field during FY 86-90.

29

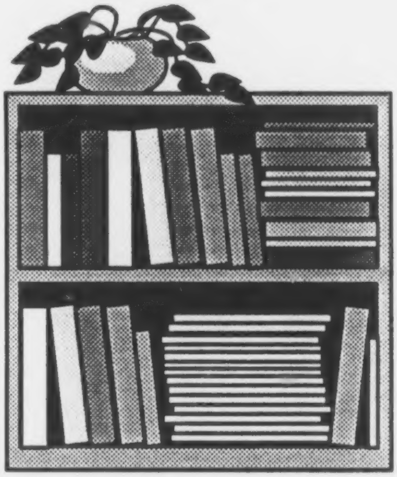
R&D products were produced by teacher, administrator, and teacher educator association/ AEL study groups during FY 86-90.

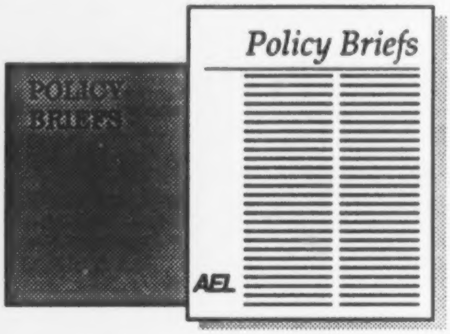


RESEARCH AND SYNTHESIS

6,430

Booklets and notebooks about AEL and R&D information were distributed to members of underrepresented groups during FY 86-90.

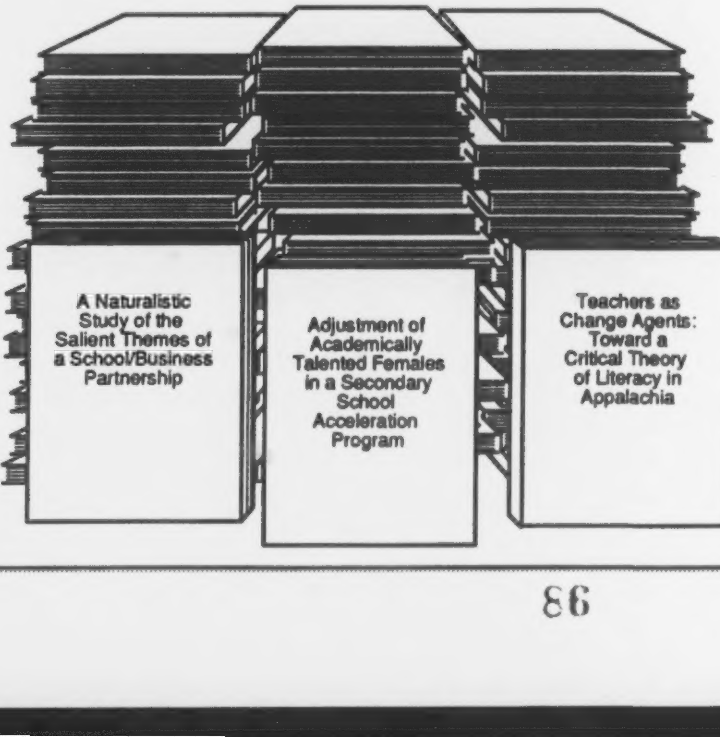




"Policy Briefs" insert copy was reformatted in FY 89. More than

600

copies were distributed to state legislators in one meeting alone.


A Naturalistic Study of the Salient Themes of a School/Business Partnership
Adjustment of Academically Talented Females in a Secondary School Acceleration Program
Teachers as Change Agents: Toward a Critical Theory of Literacy in Appalachia

Minigrant awards were made for

56

projects during FY 86-90.

SECTION B: REPORTS AND PRODUCTS: A FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY

The chart that follows provides a listing of all the reports and products produced by AEL and submitted to OERI during the FY 86-90 contract period. The chart references the type of product, the program responsible for producing it, and any cooperating agency that assisted in producing it.

SECTION B: REPORTS AND PRODUCTS: A FIVE-YEAR SUMMARY

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
ASSESSMENT REPORTS			
AEL Needs Assessment Report for FY 86 (1986)	Needs assessment report	SSC	
AEL Needs Assessment Report for FY 87 (1987)	Needs assessment report	SSC	
AEL Self-Assessment Report for FY 86 (1986)	Self-assessment report	SSC	
AEL Self-Assessment Report for FY 87 (1988)	Self-assessment report	SSC	
AEL Self-Assessment Report for FY 88 (1989)	Self-assessment report	SSC	
AEL Self-Assessment Report for FY 89 (1990)	Self-assessment report	SSC	
FY 89 AEL Needs Assessment Project Report (1989)	Needs assessment report	SSC	
Needs and Capabilities Assessment Report (1987)	Needs assessment report	SSC	
MEETING AND CONFERENCE REPORTS			
CI Annual Conference Report (1987)	Annual conference report	CI	
MINIGRANT REPORT SERIES			
AEL Minigrant Report Series (#1-#9) (1988)	Minigrant report series	PP&R	
AEL Minigrant Report Series (#10-#15) (1989)	Minigrant report series	PP&R	
AEL Minigrant Report Series (#16-#55) (1990)	Minigrant report series	PP&R	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
NEWSLETTERS/BROCHURES			
Specialized Brochures (7) (1986)	Brochures	SSC	
The Link, Volume 5, No. 1 - 4 (1986)	Newsletter	RLC	
The Link, Volume 6, No. 1 - 4 (1987)	Newsletter	RLC	
The Link, Volume 7, No. 1 - 4 (1988)	Newsletter	RLC	
The Link, Volume 8, No. 1 - 4 (1989)	Newsletter	RLC	
The Link, Volume 9, No. 1 - 4 (1990)	Newsletter	SSC	
OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES			
A Demographic Study of Rural, Small School Districts in Four Appalachian States (Occasional Paper 025) (1987)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
A Survey of Early Childhood Education and Care in the AEL Member States (Occasional Paper 031) (1990)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
Adolescent Substance Abuse Programs in AEL's Region (Occasional Paper 030) (1990)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
Children at Risk: An Urban Education Network Conference Proceedings (Occasional Paper 023) (1986)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
Developmental Teaching: A Cognitive Approach to Improving Student Achievement (Occasional Paper 027) (1988)	Occasional paper series	SSC	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES (continued)			
HOPE Revisited: Preschool to Graduation, Reflections on Parenting and School-Family Relations (Occasional Paper 028) (1989)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
Making Connections: Four Educational Perspectives (Occasional Paper 029) (1989)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
The Changing Context of Education in a Rural Setting (Occasional Paper 026) (1988)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
The Effectiveness of the Study Group as an R & D Methodology (Occasional Paper 024) (1987)	Occasional paper series	SSC	
POLICY ISSUE PAPERS			
Alternative Certification: Issues and Perspectives (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Categorical Certification in Special Ed: Does It Really Make a Difference? (1988)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Choice in American Education (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Computers and Basic Skills (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Delegating Authority, Demanding Accountability: The Change Process and Site-Based Decisionmaking (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Educational Excellence and Potential Dropouts: Theory, Research, and Policy Implications (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
POLICY ISSUE PAPERS (continued)			
Educational Reform: The Need to Redefine State-Local Governance of Schools (1989)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Effective Practices and Structures for Middle Grades Education (1989)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Home Instruction: An Overview (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Intellectually Gifted Students: Issues and Policy Implications (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Latchkey Children and School-Age Child Care: A Background Briefing (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Local Control of Schools: Is Local Governance a Viable Option? (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Prekindergarten Curriculum: Implications for State Policy (1989)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Prekindergarten Programs in Public Schools: A National and State Review (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Professional Standards for Teaching: The Assessment of Teacher Knowledge and Skill (1988)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Recapturing the Policymaking Function of State Boards (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Restructuring America's Schools (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Review of Public School Finance in the Appalachia Educational Laboratory States (1990)	Policy issue paper	PPC	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
POLICY ISSUE PAPERS (continued)			
School Dropouts: Policy Prospects (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Site-Based Decisionmaking (1990)	Policy issue packet	PPC	
State Strategic Planning (1986)	Policy issue paper	PPC	
Ungraded Primary (1990)	Policy issue packet	PPC	
Year-Round Schools (1990)	Policy issue packet	PPC	
QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL REPORTS			
AEL Quarterly Report (12/1/85-2/28/86) (includes Management Information System Report)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (3/1/86-5/31/86)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (6/1/86-8/31/86) (includes Governance and Organizational Status Report)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (12/1/86-2/28/87)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (3/1/87-5/31/87)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (6/1/87-8/31/87)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (12/1/87-2/29/88)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (3/1/88-5/31/88)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (6/1/88-8/31/88)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (12/1/88-2/28/89)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL REPORTS (continued)			
AEL Quarterly Report (3/1/89-5/31/89)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (6/1/89-8/31/89)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (12/1/89-2/28/90)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (3/1/90-5/31/90)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
AEL Quarterly Report (6/1/90-8/31/90)	Quarterly performance report	SSC	
Annual Report, December 1, 1985, through November 30, 1986	Annual performance report	SSC	
Annual Report, December 1, 1986, through November 30, 1987	Annual performance report	SSC	
Annual Report, December 1, 1987, through November 30, 1988	Annual performance report	SSC	
Annual Report, December 1, 1988, through November 30, 1989	Annual performance report	SSC	
REPORTS, PROCEEDINGS, CATALOGS, AND PROPOSALS			
AEL 1986 Report to the Board of Directors (1986)	Annual report	RLC	
Catalog of Programs, Research Reports, and Technical Assistance Ideas from Educators in Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (1989)	Catalog	RLC	
Distance Learning Status Report (1986)	Trend analysis report	PPC	

REPORTS, PROCEEDINGS, CATALOGS, AND PROPOSALS (continued)

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
Educational Technology: Beyond the Micro (1986)	Policy symposium proceedings	PPC	
Emerging Topics for Professional Development: Maximizing the Headroom (1988)	Proceedings	RLC	
Final Report: Education for Career Development Project (1988)	Summary of teacher education model	SSC	
HOPE, Preschool to Graduation: Contributions to Parenting and School-Family Relations Theory and Practice (Final Report) (1989)	Summary of database analysis	SSC	
Parent-Community Involvement: Collabororation by Another Name (1989)	Urban education annual report	RLC	
Parent-Community Involvement: The Final Report (1990)	Urban education annual report	RLC	
Parental Involvement: Asking the Real Questions (1988)	Urban education annual report	RLC	
Pilot Test of the Proposed Method for Selecting a Panel of Experts (1987)	Trend analysis report	PPC	
Proceedings: Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, Special Policymaker Briefing (1990)	Policy symposium proceedings	PPC	
Proceedings of Our Children--Our Future: The Care and Education of Young Children (1989)	Policy symposium proceedings	PPC	
Task 5 Technical Proposal (1986)	Proposal	SSC	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
REPORTS, PROCEEDINGS, CATALOGS, AND PROPOSALS (continued)			
The Competitive Edge: Preparing Youth for Jobs of the Future (1987)	Policy symposium proceedings	PPC	
RURAL, SMALL SCHOOLS REPORTS			
A Calendar of National Meetings in Which RSS Will Make a Presentation (1990)	Rural education contract, Attachment A	RSS	
AEL Interim Report on the Rural, Small Schools Program (1989)	Report	RSS	
AEL Interim Report on the Status of Rural Education in the AEL Region (1988)	Report	RSS	
Evaluation Report: Qualitative Analysis of the Rural, Small Schools Partnership Model (1990)	Report	RSS	
From One Rural School to Another: Promising Practices from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia [and flyer] (1990)	Catalog of promising practices	RSS	
Hart County Parent Involvement Project: Preliminary Report of Pre- and Post-test with AEL's Level of Parent Involvement Questionnaire (1989)	Report	RSS	
Impact Report (1990)	Report	RSS	
Taking the Pulse--Report of Findings, A Community Conference to Gather Information About School Needs in Braxton County, West Virginia (1987)	Report	RSS	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
RURAL, SMALL SCHOOLS REPORTS (continued)			
Taking the Pulse--Report of Findings, A Community Conference to Gather Information About School Needs in Charlotte County, Virginia (1988)	Report	RSS	
Taking the Pulse--Report of Findings, A Community Conference to Gather Information About School Needs in Hancock County, Tennessee (1988)	Report	RSS	
Taking the Pulse--Report of Findings, A Community Conference to Gather Information About School Needs in Hart County, Kentucky (1988)	Report	RSS	
The Condition of Rural Education in Kentucky: A Profile (1989)	AEL state profile	RSS	
The Condition of Rural Education in Tennessee: A Profile (1989)	AEL state profile	RSS	
The Condition of Rural Education in Virginia: A Profile (1989)	AEL state profile	RSS	
The Condition of Rural Education in West Virginia: A Profile (1989)	AEL state profile	RSS	
STUDY GROUP PRODUCTS			
A Statewide Program of Support for Beginning Administrators, The Kentucky Institute for Beginning Principals (1987)	Study group product	SGA	KASA

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
STUDY GROUP PRODUCTS (continued)			
A Study on the Use of Time for Reading Instruction in Grades One, Two, and Three in West Virginia Schools (1987)	Study group product	SGA	WVASA
Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide (1988)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Beginning Teacher's Handbook (1988)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Bridges to Strength: The TEA-AEL Mentor Teacher Resource Book (1988)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Computer Awareness Session for Tennessee School Administrators (1986)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Drawing Marginal Learners Into the Big Picture (1989)	Study group product	CI	KEA
Early Childhood Resource Kit (1990)	Study group product	CI	KEA
Elementary School Guidance and Counseling in Virginia: An Emerging Program (1987)	Study group product	SGA	VAESP
Factoring in Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools (1989)	Study group product	CI	WVEA
Final Report of the WVEA-AEL Community Support Through Public Relations Study Group (1988)	Study group product	CI	WVEA

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
STUDY GROUP PRODUCTS (continued)			
Helping Hands: Effective Programs for At-Risk Students in Virginia (1988)	Study group product	CI	VEA
Keys to an Effective Internship (1986)	Study group product	CI	KEA
Maintaining Positive Educator Morale During Consolidation (1988)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring (1990)	Study group product	CI	VEA
Opinions About the Tennessee Career Ladder: A Statewide Survey of Tennessee Administrators (1988)	Study group product	SGA	TASSA
Parent Education Notebook (1986)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Participatory Decisionmaking: Working Models in Virginia Elementary Schools (1988)	Study group product	SGA/CI	VAESP & VEA
Programs of Promise: A Summary of Current Programs Focusing on the Recruitment of Minority Candidates to Careers in Professional Education (1988)	Study group product	PP&R	TACTE
Public Opinion About Kentucky School Boards: Results of a Statewide Survey (1987)	Study group product	SGA	KSBA
Senate Bill 14: 1988 Changes in Funding Education in West Virginia (1988)	Study group product	SGA	WVASA

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
STUDY GROUP PRODUCTS (continued)			
Southwest Virginia Instructional Conference--A Needs-Based Professional Development Model (1986)	Study group product	CI	VEA
Survey of Effective Elementary Guidance Programs (1989)	Study group product	SGA	KASA & KDE
TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets (1990)	Study group product	CI	TEA
Teacher Evaluation Model (1986)	Study group product	CI	WVEA
Teaching Combined Grade Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices (1990)	Study group product	CI	VEA
The Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Project Dissemination Packet (1987)	Study group product	SGA	TASCD
Tips for Teaching Marginal Learners (1986)	Study group product	CI	KEA
Training Needs for West Virginia Boardsmanship Academy (1987)	Study group product	SGA	WVSBA
WORKSHOP PACKAGES			
Addressing the Problem of Substance Abuse: Programs for Drug-Free Schools (1987)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
At-Risk Students: The Dropout Problem (1988)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
Becoming a Power Evaluator of Students' Academic Achievements (1988)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
WORKSHOP PACKAGES (continued)			
Community Support Through Public Relations: Marketing the Good News About Your Schools (1986)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
Educating the Preschooler: The Third Wave of Educational Reform (1990)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA	
Educational Goals Workshop: What a Difference a Goal Makes! (1987)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA	
Effective Questioning: Good Questions Don't Just Happen (1987)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
Focusing on Motivation: The Need to Succeed (1990)	School Excellence Workshop package	CI	
Instructional Time: Timekeeping in the Classroom (1987)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
Marginal Learners: Ways to Help Through Instruction and Policy (1988)	School Excellence Workshop package	CI	
Parent Involvement: Improving School-Family Communications and Building Effective Parent-School Relationships (1987)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
Reinforcement and Rewards: Beyond Gold Stars and M & Ms (1986)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
School Climate: Unlike the Weather, YOU Can Improve It (1989)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA	
Staff Development: Helping Staff Meet Today's Challenges (1986)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	

Product Title	Product Type	Program	Cooperating Agency
WORKSHOP PACKAGES (continued)			
Summaries of AEL School Excellence Workshops (1986)	School Excellence Workshop summaries	SGA/CI	
Teacher as Decisionmaker--Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School (1989)	School Excellence Workshop package	CI	
WHAT WORKS: Putting What Works to Work with Parents (1986)	School Excellence Workshop package	SGA/CI	
NON-PRINT PRODUCTS			
Risky Futures: The Video Proceedings, FY 88 Symposium (1988)	Policy symposium proceedings	PPC	
OTHER REPORTS AND PRODUCTS			
AEL Final Report: Operation of the Educational Laboratory for the Appalachian Region, 1986-90, (Contract No. 400-86-0001) (1990)	Final report	SSC	
Annual Update - FY 89, AEL's School Services Center Multistate Study (1989)	Annual update on multistate study results	SSC	
Annual Update on Multistate Study Results (1990)	Report	SSC	
Disparities in Curricular Offerings: Issues and Policy Alternatives for Small Rural Schools (1988)	Policy synthesis paper for CSSOs	PPC	
P. L. 99-457: A New Federal Initiative for Handicapped Infants and Toddlers (1987)	Policy synthesis paper for CSSOs	PPC	

PART IV

SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH YEAR--FY 90

SECTION A: OVERALL SUMMARY OF FY 90 LABORATORY PERFORMANCE

The purpose of this section is to provide the FY 90 annual report of AEL's performance as Regional Educational Laboratory for Region 3. Following the presentation of governance, management, and planning and evaluation work under Task 1, each of the seven projects is reviewed under the task area with which it is associated.

Task 1: Governance, Management, Planning, and Evaluation

Task 1 includes development of effective governance, management, planning, and evaluation systems for the Laboratory. Highlights of actions for FY 90 follow.

Governance, Management, and Staffing

- Regular meetings of the AEL Board of Directors were held during each quarter of FY 90. Meetings were held in Charleston, West Virginia, on January 26-27; in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 19-20; in Lexington, Kentucky, on July 20-21; and in Roanoke, Virginia, on September 30-October 1. During these meetings, the Board confirmed appointments of two designated representatives to replace members whose terms had expired. In addition, an appointment was confirmed to fill a Director-at-Large vacancy for the remainder of 1990. All actions of the Board are reported in minutes from each meeting; such minutes are maintained in corporate files at the Laboratory's headquarters.

- The AEL Executive Committee met in the first, second, and fourth quarters during regular meetings of the Board of Directors. All recommendations and actions of the Executive Committee are reported to the Board; therefore, they are included in the minutes of the Board meeting.

- The Board's program and center advisory committees for AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory projects met in conjunction with each regular quarterly Board meeting in FY 90.

- Throughout FY 90, AEL's Management Team held both regular and special meetings. At these sessions, directors of REL-supported projects regularly shared updates on their project's activities. Some of the major topics discussed by members included the 1991-95 proposal preparation process and outcomes, completion of end-of-year reports, plans for collaborative work with other Regional Laboratories, strategies for responding to information requests, and preparations for staff development sessions.

- Two temporary staff members were employed during FY 90, one each in the Rural, Small Schools program and in the School Services Center. The recruitment and selection process was completed for five regular fulltime positions in the Classroom Instruction program (two positions); the School Services Center (one position); the Rural, Small Schools program (one position); and AEL Administration (one position). One staff member resigned a position in the Rural, Small Schools program.

Needs Sensing and Planning

- The AEL needs sensing database includes a continuous environmental scanning of the major newspapers from the capital cities in the Region. Throughout each quarter of the year, staff entered the scanned articles into the needs sensing database.

- The final version of the FY 89 AEL Needs Assessment Project Report was assembled and delivered to OERI in the first quarter of this year. This report included an education status report on each of the member states. These education status reports were developed jointly by consultants and Board members from the respective states.

- The AEL Board of Directors reviewed the Lab's mission statement and four overarching goals during its first quarterly meeting as the first step in planning for future work in the Region. The Board reaffirmed its commitment to the mission statement and the four overarching goals. At its May 1990 meeting, the AEL Board determined that the Lab's mission and overarching goals would be enhanced by adding two new levels of goals. The Board then established five instrumental goals and three performance goals for future work in the Region.

- Also at its May meeting, the Board considered and approved "AEL State Planning Meetings" as an addition to the Laboratory's planning process, effective in FY 91. These meetings will be another means to assure that AEL adequately plans its activities to reflect each state's education reform results.

Self-Assessment and Evaluation

- The draft of the AEL FY 89 self-assessment report was completed early in March 1990 and sent to the Executive Committee of the governing Board for critical review. In mid-March, the Executive Committee members provided their reactions and suggestions to the draft self-assessment report. Staff then revised the draft report, and the final version was submitted to OERI in the second quarter. The Western Michigan University (WMU) external evaluator's report was included as a separately bound attachment. The Executive Committee reported its approval of the FY 89 self-assessment report to the Board.

- Negotiations between AEL and WMU staff regarding the FY 90 external evaluation subcontract were completed during the second quarter. Given the end-of-year reporting changes requested by OERI, the final report due date was moved up four months to November 1990. One unique activity in the FY 90 external evaluation was the intensive case study of AEL's impact in one selected school district. WMU staff completed their draft external evaluation report and sent it to AEL staff for review in the last quarter. AEL staff reviewed the draft copy and sent their suggestions back to WMU external evaluators, also in the last quarter. WMU evaluators completed the report and submitted it to AEL. Their FY 90 external evaluation report is a separately bound document not submitted with the AEL final report per OERI directions.

- Lab evaluators routinely completed evaluation summaries and reports for programs and centers in all quarters of the year. A total of 66 evaluation summaries was completed by Lab evaluators. Also, in preparation for the final report, AEL evaluators completed special evaluations, such as The Link readership survey and the "Focus on Instruction" insert readership survey.

Task 2: Regional Liaison Center

Activity 1: Presenting Information

This activity provided strategies and procedures for disseminating information about AEL and relevant R & D about educational improvement to underrepresented groups in the Region.

- The Regional Liaison Center (RLC) provided information in a variety of ways during FY 90. Information was disseminated through booklets, notebooks, folders, ring-bound notebooks, and stapled pages. The information was also distributed through workshops and symposia or through mass distribution during formal presentations. RLC records indicate that, to date, 6,430 distributed items were recorded. Events at which materials were disseminated are listed below as they relate to regional functions and by individual states.

  - Regional: The director traveled to Columbus, Ohio, at the request of the Ohio State Department of Education to deliver one of the keynote addresses to 250 conference participants at their statewide dropout prevention conference. Fifty-six parent groups and one or more identified contact members in those organizations across the Region received 109 packets of parent involvement materials. The director presented a workshop at a National Dropout Prevention Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, and distributed 60 copies each of the FY 88 and FY 89 urban education annual reports. A regional inservice training for a parents' conference was cosponsored by RLC and hosted in Louisville, Kentucky, May 15-17, 1990.

    Registration packets were mailed to 3,615 potential conferees, and 214 conference proceeding documents were disseminated. The Maternal Infant Health Outreach program collaborated with RLC in conducting a regional three-day conference in Charleston, West Virginia, on September 26-28, 1990, where 56 packets of training materials to improve teen parenting skills were developed and disseminated. RLC presented two out-of-Region workshops. A parent training workshop titled "Empowering Parents: The Key to Success" was conducted, and 75 workshop packets were disseminated at the Region III National Coalition of Title I/Chapter 1 Parents' inservice training in Wilmington, Delaware, on April 19-20. RLC's director was one of two presenters selected by the Washington Post (expenses paid) to conduct seminars for the 14 recipients of the Post's 1989 Distinguished Educational Leadership Award, May 10, 1990, at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. The FY 89 urban education annual report was mailed to regional clients during the first quarter of FY 90 and 360 copies were distributed.

- Kentucky: Seventy-five Jefferson County teachers received inservice training packets on April 28, 1990. Upon request, 30 packets of R & D-based materials on site-based management, 30 copies each of the FY 88 and FY 89 urban education annual reports, and 30 copies of a parent-prepared report, titled "Project Focus," were forwarded to select participants.

  Workshop materials, titled "Empowerment as a Strategy for Influencing School Personnel," were distributed to 50 community members in Bowling Green on April 27, 1990. A minority congressional document identifying Black members of Congress was distributed in Bowling Green (75 copies) and Owensboro (100 copies), and at an annual National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) banquet and the statewide conference on October 28 and November 4, 1990, respectively.

- West Virginia: At the Black Summit Leadership Conference on February 28, 1990, 75 copies of the multicultural workshop materials titled "Kids" were distributed. During the next quarter, 93 copies of the conference proceedings were mailed to participants. A parent coordinator from Mound Elementary School (Kanawha County) requested 20 copies of multicultural materials. In addition to 80 copies of "Parents as Partners," 130 copies each of "Policy 2149: Regulations for Children with Learning Disabilities" and a resource handbook titled "Parents and Educators Planning for the Exceptional Child" were distributed to parents for the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities on March 10, 1990.

  In Harpers Ferry, August 10-11, 1990, 75 copies of a document titled "What the Research Sez" were disseminated to conferees at the West Virginia Conference of Branches, NAACP annual statewide meeting. On August 23 and 30, 127 packets were provided at multicultural workshops to teachers, principals, and administrators in Logan County.

  RLC staff provided 500 flyers for Kanawha Residents United to Stop Aids (KRUSAIDS) announcing a community education forum meeting on AIDS on April 4, 1990. Brochures (500) and newsletters (300) were disseminated for a parent group called the Coalition of Parents/Advocates, Inc.

  Keynote presentations were made in Fairmont at the Women of Color banquet to approximately 100 guests, and at Marshall University in Huntington to more than 50 minority faculty, administrators, and students.

- Virginia: The Center director distributed 64 packets of materials on at-risk students during two seminars to train vocational special needs teachers for the Virginia Department of Education in Virginia Beach on August 8, 1990.

Thirty-five resource material packets and 35 multicultural education booklets were prepared for two Kanawha County (West Virginia) minority educators. Three training sessions were also provided the educators to enable them to conduct a seminar at the Afrikan Awareness Weekend Conference held at Virginia Polytechnic Institute in Blacksburg on February 2-4, 1990.

- Tennessee: One hundred packets of resource materials were provided at the February 3, 1990, At-Risk Conference sponsored by Memphis State University. Packets of materials on improving teen parenting skills were distributed to 21 participants in a three-day conference in New Market, March 5-7, 1990. During the National Dropout Prevention Conference, "Breaking the Cycle," May 26-27, 1990, 60 copies each of RLC's FY 88 and FY 90 urban education annual reports were disseminated in an RLC-conducted workshop. Staff traveled to the Tennessee State Conference of Branches, NAACP to make a formal presentation and to distribute 200 research-oriented documents to the conferees.

  RLC distributed 140 copies of a United States Congressional Roster Document of Black Americans to the Haywood community at an annual banquet on October 27, 1990, in Brownsville.

  Two hundred and fifty copies of a composite document of multicultural materials were disseminated at the 16th Annual Tennessee Legislative Black Caucus in Chattanooga on November 15-17, 1990. The Center director made a formal presentation as a panelist to more than 300 participants in the general session audience, where the director also served as respondent to Annette Polly Williams, author of the nation's first state supported parental choice education program in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

- The initial collaboration with West Virginia State College, the West Virginia Coalition of Adult Literacy in January 1990, carried across the year and resulted in a rather extensive computerized program of more than 3,700 names of members of statewide literacy groups; the production of the first master roster list of mailing labels; and receipt by AEL of a public service award at the Coalition's annual banquet on September 13, 1990.

- The RLC director collaborated with the NAACP State Conference of Branches, The Prince Hall Grand Lodge of West Virginia, West Virginia Beacon Digest, and the Charleston Black Ministerial Alliance, Inc./KRUSAIDS by participating in the planning and promotion of the Third Annual Black Summit Leadership Conference as a member of the steering committee. The director served as a presenter and as a resource person.

- The RLC director coordinated a meeting with the governor of West Virginia and members of the Black community in Jefferson County for a question-and-answer session for two hours prior to the governor's official appearance at a public forum. Additionally, the director facilitated one of several large groups at the governor's statewide education forum in the Berkeley and Jefferson county areas.

- The Educational Subcommittee of the Black Summit Leadership Conference organized miniworkshop sessions throughout the year in efforts to conceptualize a design for implementing a demonstration site elementary school in Charleston, West Virginia. Several meetings were held with Steve Haid, secretary of education and the arts; the Kanawha County superintendent of schools and key staff; and the principal and school facilitator of a potential site. A full-day meeting was held on November 13, 1990, to finalize the design of the project based on input and collaborative agreements.

- RLC collaborated with the District Advisory Council of Jefferson County (Kentucky), the Jefferson County Public Schools, and the Region IV National Coalition of Parents in cosponsoring the 13th Annual Parent Inservice Training Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, May 15-17, 1990. RLC sponsored 13 parents and educators from Huntington, West Virginia, and 11 parents from Louisville, Kentucky, to attend the conference. Additionally, RLC staff designed and produced conference notebooks, evaluation forms, and workshop signs, and provided overall assistance to the parents in conducting the three-day conference.

- RLC staff maintained participant lists for each sponsored meeting, workshop, and conference. Followup procedures, such as conference proceedings, and mailing relevant research materials, were implemented to sustain regular contact. Concerted efforts were made to provide documents and information from other programs and centers.

Activity 2: Convening Groups

Events were both initiated and cosponsored to involve large numbers of minorities and underrepresented individuals and groups in the educational improvement processes and projects.

- RLC staff provided members of the executive board of a statewide organization called the Coalition of Parents/Advocates (COP/A) with extended training in organizational skills, needs-sensing techniques, and the establishment and maintenance of networks throughout FY 90. Technical assistance was provided in designing a newsletter and brochure, of which 300 newsletters and 500 brochures were distributed to the 300 COP/A members.

- RLC exhibited materials and participated in the first West Virginia Initiative on Drug Abuse at Stonewall Jackson State Forest as a followup to collaborative efforts between RLC, the West Virginia Federation of Parents, the West Virginia Division of Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, and the South Charleston (West Virginia) "Impact for Life" program.

- RLC cosponsored a regional meeting for outreach workers who provide technical assistance and support to single- and teenage-parent mothers and their young children. Monica Appleby of the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker program and Kathy Scaggs of the Vanderbilt Medical Center provided regional coordination services for the three-day conference in Charleston on September 26-28, 1990.

- RLC staff met in a collaborative effort with the KRUSAIDS Committee staff, and designed and developed an AIDS training manual that was culturally specific for the Black community audiences. The draft AIDS manual was reviewed by members of the medical community, select young adults from the Charleston Job Corps, and members of the Ministerial Alliance. The manual was field tested twice, taken to final print, and submitted to the committee in November 1990.

- Ron Whitlock of Bowling Green, Kentucky, distributed workshop materials (from the Kentucky State Conference of Branches, NAACP, October 7, 1989) and conducted three community training events utilizing the "Empowerment as a Strategy for Influencing School Personnel" during the spring and summer of 1990. Whitlock also formed a group of young teenagers to develop strategies to enhance the self-esteem of Black youth. Whitlock further established a subcommittee in the community to explore conducting the workshop as an inservice for teachers, administrators, and board members. The Bowling Green community formally established PARENT (Parents Attending To Real Educational Needs Together) as a culmination of the educational activities during the last two fiscal years.

- No site has been formally identified as a school improvement project. However, the Educational Subcommittee of the Black Summit Leadership Conference has designed, with technical assistance from RLC staff, an improvement plan with the principal and school facilitator of a potential site. Staff also met with the Parent Advisory Council of Spring Hill Elementary School (Huntington, West Virginia) in an initial meeting to develop a long-term plan for increasing parental involvement and the improvement of the school's image.

- The urban education annual reports, titled Parental Involvement: Asking the Real Questions (FY 88) and Parent-Community Involvement: Collaboration by Another Name (FY 89), were briefly summarized in the FY 90 report. Interviews, observations, and outcomes were incorporated into an analytical report on the successes, problems, and implications over the past three years of RLC's educational improvement efforts throughout the Region. RLC staff disseminated this report to RLC clients and educational stakeholders interested in the problems and issues of urban education.

Activity 3: Collaborating on the Urban Education Network

The director of the Regional Liaison Center serves as AEL's coordinator for collaborative efforts among the nine Regional Labs in urban education and kids-at-risk activities.

- Activities involving meeting to plan for the annual conference and cosponsoring the annual interregional conference were deleted as indicated in prior quarterly reports. However, AEL redirected its commitment to urban education through the Regional Educational Laboratories' collaborative Task 5 theme, "Kids at Risk."

- The RLC director served as the primary contact for the nine Laboratories in coordinating the cosponsorship of the National Dropout Prevention Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in May 1990. Each Laboratory presented workshop sessions, a general session of the combined Lab coordinators, and an exhibit table displaying materials available from each of the Labs. Conference brochures were disseminated from each Lab, and the Far West Laboratory provided the evaluation instrument and analysis of the data. The nine Lab coordinators attended a planning meeting to organize collaborative plans for the upcoming dropout conference.

- AEL has also collaborated with several of the Regional Educational Laboratories in efforts to conceptualize an effective and efficient program for increasing recruitment of minorities into practical research and development in the Labs and Centers. The RLC director participated in three planning meetings on February 27-28, September 12-13, and October 10-11, 1990.

Activity 4: Maintaining Communications

- During the first quarter of FY 90, reorganization of RLC general communication responsibilities was put into effect due to a shift in the Center's primary role in the Region. The activity is reported under the School Services Center.

- The Parent Regional Network established under Activity 4 was subsumed under Activity 2.

Activity 5: Managing RLC

This activity was designed to facilitate effective management, budgeting, and evaluation of the Center's goals and objectives.

- The RLC director participated with Management Team members on a regular basis throughout FY 90 in meetings designed to share, advise, and evaluate project operations with regard to budget and program matters. Technical assistance and administrative oversight on matters of recruitment, selection, and hiring were provided by the director in the capacity of the Lab's affirmative action officer and in cooperation with the personnel officer. Additionally, information requested from the Office of Federal Contracts and Compliance was assembled and forwarded to the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, office relative to AEL's personnel processes and affirmative action plans and programs. Jane Copley, AEL's business manager, works with RLC on all financial matters of expenditure.

- The Center director attended one national conference of a major minority organization to evaluate the issues and concerns that have national and regional implications for minority and urban communities. RLC continued to advise clients of opportunities to be involved in AEL's other program and center activities.

- The RLC director prepared materials and agenda for each advisory committee member, and provided copies of all materials, documents, and workshop packets disseminated to RLC's clients during FY 90. The packets included summaries of the Center's performance during the previous quarters, the quarterly report (if available), and a calendar of upcoming events.

Task 2: Classroom Instruction Program

Activity 1: Establish and Maintain Communication Channels Between the Program and Teachers and Other Service Providers

This activity has three workscopes to provide one- and two-way communication to individual teachers and through associations to teachers throughout the Region.

- Four "Focus on Instruction" inserts to AEL's quarterly newsletter, The Link, were developed with the assistance of members of the Classroom Instruction (CI) Program Advisory Committee. A total of 51 educators developed articles for CI inserts that were mailed to more than 2,300 readers. Analysis of the FY 90 "Focus on Instruction" readership survey responses (107 of 2,300 mailed) indicated that the average reader shared the insert with 10 others. In other survey results, readers said they most appreciated the concise and timely articles, the current information on classroom practices, and the contact information provided for article authors.

- Copy developed by or generated from CI staff-provided information appeared in 16 National Education Association (NEA) state affiliate newsletters or journals and in three other journals in FY 90. One such example was the inclusion of an interview, conducted by the CI training specialist with Todd Strohmenger, director of AEL's Rural, Small Schools program, on the future of technology in education, and two bulletins from the AEL Microcomputers for Teachers series that were featured in the August issue of the Tennessee Education Association's (TEA's) Tennessee Teacher, a thematic issue on technology. More than 43,500 educators receive Tennessee Teacher. Also, "Research Clues" in the November 1990 issue of NEA Today (two million recipients) included an article titled "Labs for Learning," which drew entirely from interviews conducted with a CI study group member, the Virginia Education Association (VEA) instruction and professional development director, and AEL's John Sanders.

- CI staff continued to maintain communications with clients by providing information during FY 90. Staff documented 905 contacts to educators and others associated with education during the year. Following is a breakdown of the contacts for the four-state Region served by AEL: Kentucky--129 clients received information from CI staff during FY 90; Tennessee--169 clients were assisted by CI staff during FY 90; Virginia--224 clients received information from CI staff during FY 90; and West Virginia--during FY 90, 231 clients were helped by CI staff through correspondence and phone communications.

- Other: In FY 90, CI staff provided information to 152 individuals and organizations outside the AEL Region.

- CI staff went "online" during late FY 88 and throughout FY 89 and 90 in responding to requests from clients on the NEA's Mastery in Learning (MIL) project's School Renewal Network, an electronic bulletin board and network of 27 MIL schools and more than 30 other schools, universities, and other sites of restructuring. As the Parent/Community Involvement Researcher Site, one of nine topical research-sharing sites on the Network, CI staff entered 18 papers on topics such as parent/community involvement in urban schools, community services, guidelines for teacher communications with parents, community study, parent assistance to students at home, and other related topics. The Network provides a means of immediate response to information requests. CI staff replied online and through correspondence to approximately 85 requests in FY 90.

Activity 2: Provide Training Opportunities

This activity has five workscopes to develop workshops and provide training and technical assistance through NEA-related and other organizations to teachers throughout the Region.

- CI staff developed one School Excellence Workshop (SEW) for FY 90. "Focus on Motivation: The Need to Succeed" was developed by AEL consultants Peggy Dent and Douglas Fleming working with CI staff. The workshop package, one of 16 AEL SEWs, was submitted to OERI as a deliverable during the first quarter. "Focus on Motivation" was showcased in an awareness session format at the FY 89 and FY 90 Potpourri workshops.

- During FY 90, CI and School Governance and Administration (SGA) program staffs convened two training planning meetings to arrange cosponsorship of training-for-trainers events of AEL SEWS. Potpourri '89 data and descriptions of all 16 AEL SEWs were presented to representatives from the West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA), West Virginia Education Association (WVEA), and the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) on April 9 at a Charleston, West Virginia, training planning meeting. This meeting resulted in a major training-for-trainers event in which seven SEWs were presented during the June 21-23 West Virginia Institute for School Success (WVISS) organized by WVDE and held at the Charleston Civic Center for 242 participants. CI staff were involved in planning, providing camera-ready masters of training manuals, organizing presenters, presenting, evaluating, and developing followup mailings to participants and WVDE.

- Frankfort, Kentucky, was the site of the second training planning meeting of FY 90 held on May 22. Representatives from the Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA), the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), and KEA reviewed sample training manuals, results of the Kentucky State Planning Meeting held at Potpourri '89, and descriptions of all AEL SEWs.

- CI and SGA cosponsored nine AEL SEW training-for-trainers events during FY 90. Three hundred and nineteen participants were trained in these cosponsored events. These data indicate increases from the seven training-for-trainers events conducted in FY 89 for 269 participants (16 percent increase in participants). The one and a half to two-day training events, AEL's cosponsoring agencies, training dates, and numbers of participants are as follows:
  - Tennessee: "Educating the Preschooler" in Nashville; collaboration with the Tennessee Department of Education and several educator associations; May 2-3 (24 educators).
  - Virginia: "Educating the Preschooler" in Lynchburg; collaboration with the Virginia Department of Education and several educator associations; April 2-3 (51).
  - West Virginia: The West Virginia Institute for School Success in Charleston; sponsored by the West Virginia Department of Education, included the following seven training-for-trainers events: "At-Risk Students" (24 educators), "Community Support through Public Relations" (26 educators), "Educating the Preschooler" (33 educators and social agency staff), "Focusing on Motivation" (46 educators), "Marginal Learners" (37 educators), "Parent Involvement" (37 educators), and "Teacher as Decisionmaker" (40 educators); June 21-23.
- AEL continued in FY 90 to track the impact of the training-for-trainers strategy through administration of the annual Trainers Feedback Form survey. All participants (440) in AEL training events that occurred since the FY 89 administration of the survey of AEL-trained trainers (12), were mailed a form during the fourth quarter of FY 90. Data were collected, analyzed, and summarized by School Services Center staff. Respondents (228, a 52 percent response rate) reported conducting 56 replication workshops of the AEL School Excellence Workshops in which they were trained. A total of 1,456 participants was reported for these replication workshops.
- Planning was held throughout the year for AEL's Potpourri '90 Workshop held October 27-28 in Nashville, Tennessee. Approximately 102 teachers and administrators from AEL's Region attended awareness sessions on four SEWs: "Focusing on Motivation," "Marginal Learners," "Teacher as Decisionmaker," and "Community Support through Public Relations." Potpourri '90 also served as an AEL Study Group Conference. During the conference's eight concurrent sessions, participants presented the findings and discussed the products of 17 study groups sponsored by the CI (9) or SGA (8) programs. The Study Group Conference was made possible by a restoration of funds to the two programs and marks the first appearance of this AEL vehicle of dissemination and recognition since 1987. All participants attended each of the four workshop

awareness sessions, two of the eight study group sessions, and their own State Planning Meeting to identify training priorities for 1990-91. In the State Planning Meetings that closed the event, participants selected the following highest priorities for training: Kentucky—Focusing on Motivation; Tennessee--Community Support; Virginia--Community Support; and West Virginia--TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets.

- CI staff were involved in planning, communicating with presenters, developing materials, contacting associations regarding participation, organizing display tables and participant notebooks, presenting sessions, and evaluating sessions and the workshops.

- During FY 90, CI staff, Program Advisory Committee members, and AEL-trained trainers provided 15 special-topic workshops or AEL awareness sessions to more than 350 educators in the four-state Region.

- Another form of AEL awareness for teachers and others unacquainted with the Lab's work in the Region is the provision of packets of information on AEL and CI events, services, and products. During FY 90, 9,586 packets or other separate information resources were prepared and distributed at AEL and association events.

- During FY 90, CI staff continued to serve the 27 Mastery in Learning (MIL) schools and more than 30 other sites of restructuring through the MIL electronic bulletin board and the School Renewal Network. CI staff contributed as the Parent/Community Involvement Researcher Site (see Activity 1). CI staff received training during the first quarter in the reorganized School Renewal Network conference structure and trained a new user to the system, the teacher coordinator at Capital High School in Charleston, West Virginia, in the fourth quarter. AEL received a small stipend for CI staff time involved as the Parent/Community Involvement Researcher Site.

- Other CI staff assistance to the MIL project during FY 90 included: responded to phone evaluation interview regarding the Network; invited sponsored participation of two teachers from each Tennessee MIL site to AEL training-for-trainer workshops in the state; met with MIL project assistant director; provided draft review of TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking packets by faculty at each MIL school at CI staff request; AEL deputy executive director participated in the annual MIL breakfast meeting at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association; conducted AEL awareness session for Lassiter Middle School faculty teams in Louisville, Kentucky; presented "Marginal Learners" workshop for a Lassiter faculty retreat in Louisville; recommended Lassiter Middle School for its team approach to instruction for inclusion in a Massachusetts Advocacy Center directory of de-tracking middle schools; published articles on the annual progress of MIL schools in Virginia and Tennessee in the CI inserts to The Link; and presented at an MIL School Renewal Network Conference in Colorado during the fourth quarter.

- During FY 90, Project TEACH (Teach Everyone About Computers Here) completed its third year of implementation in March and began its fourth and final year in October 1990. Each year, approximately 500 business representatives from more than 100 companies become volunteer teachers for three-hour lessons in the elementary schools of the Kanawha County school system to provide release time for one-fourth of all Kanawha County elementary teachers to attend computer training.

- The CI director chairs the Lesson Planning Committee of Project TEACH that prepared the volunteer packet and that annually conducts two or more volunteer orientations on teaching tips and lesson and classroom management suggestions. During FY 90, the CI director participated in several meetings to plan the Project TEACH Kit that contains a program organizational videotape; software to assist scheduling; the volunteer packet; and a manual of recruitment, organization, training, evaluation, and volunteer recognition instructions. She edited the volunteer packet and assisted in securing permission to reprint some inclusions; was interviewed about volunteer orientations and program evaluation for the Project TEACH video; participated in local marketing efforts; arranged and delivered the analysis of summative evaluation data from volunteers and assisting teachers/principals; assisted in planning Project TEACH Appreciation Day activities; assisted in planning, presenting, and evaluating two volunteer orientations; and arranged interviews and photo sessions with several TEACH contacts for an Appalachia (journal of the Appalachian Regional Commission) article on AEL and collaborators.

- Memphis City Schools (Tennessee) was one of the initial five NEA Learning Laboratory projects funded in FY 89. During FY 90, the CI director assisted Learning Laboratories in the following ways: participated in a panel on program evaluation at a meeting of the original eight Laboratories; met with Memphis City Schools, Memphis Education Association, and Memphis State University representatives to plan and later to review project and school evaluation; and presented two "Targets for Trainers: Group Processes" workshops with 20 Memphis City Schools staff developers who work with the seven Learning Laboratory schools. In a later funding round, Jefferson County Schools, Louisville, Kentucky, became an NEA Learning Laboratory site. During the fourth quarter, the CI director, at the request of the district teachers' association, met with representatives from the district and Jefferson County Teachers Association to discuss and plan AEL assistance to the project that includes all district schools.

- CI staff actively assisted West Virginia education projects during FY 90. The CI training specialist served on the planning committee of a regional conference titled "Revolution in Children's Literature" and shared AEL/CI information packets that will be distributed at the conference. She also served on the West Virginia Humanities Council-Humanities Center Steering Committee throughout FY 90 and arranged distribution of AEL packets at the Center's October FY 90 conference.

Activity 3: Establish/Support Study Groups

This activity has five workscopes to establish study groups and assist in planning, developing, and disseminating their final products.

- Study groups were operating in each state in FY 90 through CI collaboration with the four NEA state affiliates in the Region. Four study groups (three initiated in FY 89, one in FY 90) concluded their work in FY 90. Three study groups on the topics of grade combination teaching, site-based decisionmaking, and ungraded primary programs began their work in FY 90.

- With CI and association assistance, the following final products were completed by four study groups composed of a total of 27 teachers, two counselors, and two school administrators with the assistance of one NEA state affiliate staff member and CI staff:

    - KEA-AEL: The KEA-AEL Early Childhood Resource Kit,
    - TEA-AEL: The TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets,
    - VEA-AEL: Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring, and
    - VEA-AEL: Teaching Grade Combination Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices.

- CI submitted copies of each of the above-listed study group products to the ERIC Clearinghouses for accessioning and to the Communication Service Assistance Program (CSAP) of the network of Labs and Centers for announcement. Four CI study group products were announced in FY 90 CSAP descriptions: Drawing Marginal Learners Into the Big Picture; Bridges to Strength: Establishing a Mentoring Program for Beginning Teachers, an Administrator's Guide; Factoring in Empowerment: Participatory Decisionmaking in West Virginia Exemplary Schools; and Middle Schools in the Making: A Lesson in Restructuring. Two CI products were accessioned into the ERIC collections.

- Study group members were provided with typeset copy of their final product. Study group members who authored Middle Schools in the Making presented their findings at a November 1990 VEA IPD conference. All 300 participants in the conference received a copy of their document. TEA-AEL study group members presented The TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets at the TEA Summer Leadership School in July 1990. KEA-AEL study group members arranged the dissemination of 32 KEA-AEL Early Childhood Resource Kits through KEA field service offices and KDE Early Childhood Regional Training Centers throughout Kentucky. AEL provided masters of the kit's announcement brochure to all elementary/early childhood education supervisors in all Kentucky school districts.

- Ten members of 10 CI study groups presented their findings and described their products in forums and workshops in concurrent sessions at AEL's Potpourri '90 Workshop held October 27-28 in Nashville, Tennessee.

- CI staff provided camera-ready masters of the four products completed during FY 90 (see above list) and association-specific announcement flyers to the cosponsoring NEA state affiliates upon product completion. The following examples of reprinting illustrate the impact of the study group product as a professional development experience for members and for readers:

  - TEA: The TEA IPD coordinator reported the TEA printing and distribution of 5,000 copies of The TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook since its publication in FY 87; 2,000 were printed in FY 90.

  - VEA: The VEA IPD director reported the FY 90 VEA printing and distribution of more than 1,080 copies of Middle Schools in the Making.

  - WVEA: The WVEA communications director arranged the reprinting of 60 copies of Factoring in Empowerment for Midwinter Conference participants.

- AEL's Resource Center currently makes available upon request 14 CI study group publications. During FY 90, 630 copies of CI products were distributed by the Resource Center to educators within and outside AEL's Region.

Activity 4: Manage Program Administrative Functions and Participate in Intra-Lab Cooperatives

This activity has two workscopes to coordinate the actions of Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members and collaborate with other AEL programs/centers.

- PAC meetings were held on January 26, May 19, July 21, and October 1, 1990. Members provided updates on education in their states, association activities, and member field activities on behalf of the program and AEL during each quarter of FY 90. Each PAC member provided service to the program with their association colleagues and with teachers throughout their states (see state-by-state descriptions in each quarterly report), and served as facilitators for study group concurrent sessions and AEL School Excellence Workshop awareness sessions at the Potpourri '90 Workshop.

- CI staff assisted each PAC member in the development and coordination of article submissions for the CI insert to The Link, "Focus on Instruction."

- Throughout FY 90, CI staff continued to cooperate with other AEL programs/centers. For example, CI collaborated with SGA on nine training-for-trainers events with a total of 319 participants trained.

Task 2: School Governance and Administration Program

Activity 1: Providing R & D-based Information to School Administrators and School Boards

This activity involves the following: preparing the "SGA Exchange," contributing to association newsletters, using the toll-free telephone line and the Resource Center, and maintaining channels of communication.

- Either four- or eight-page inserts on topics of high priority were developed in FY 90, with 14 local and state educators contributing articles. The Kentucky Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) project reprints each issue of the "SGA Exchange" for approximately 2,000 administrators.

- Twenty-six association and other key groups received regular mailings of "R & D Notes," ERIC Digests, and R & D Preview. More than 500 educators received these mailings.

- School Governance and Administration (SGA) staff received 784 incoming calls from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia in FY 90. Calls from within the state on the toll-free line totaled 190. Staff made approximately 995 outgoing calls to educators in the Region.

- SGA staff recorded 756 requests for free materials and 166 information requests by administrators or school board members to either SGA staff or the Resource Center during the year.

- Contacts via letters, phone calls, and meetings occurred with 13,728 educators in the Region in FY 90.

- In FY 90, 12 issues of "LEAD News in the Region," including a total of 320 resources, were shared with educators in the Region.

- SGA coordinated two regional LEAD directors' meetings in Charleston, West Virginia, on May 14-15 and in Richmond, Virginia, on September 14-15. The meetings were designed to exchange information and to do collaborative planning on specific topics, such as developing future LEAD projects.

- SGA staff participated in two LEAD task forces on restructuring and school improvement.

Activity 2: Establishing and Operating State Study Groups

This activity includes initial establishment and subsequent operation of state study groups and the dissemination of study group products. Four state study groups operated in FY 90. These groups began their work in FY 89.

- Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA)-AEL study group on effective questioning

  - During the first quarter of FY 90, AEL staff and consultants met to develop a plan for evaluating the effective questioning staff development program. The design called for measuring change (pre- and posttesting) in three areas: teacher attitudes, teacher knowledge, and classroom behavior. Draft instruments were developed in these three areas. The model for effective questioning and the production of written program descriptions, including sample agendas for the intensive three-day workshop and nine collegiums to be conducted throughout the school year, were revised. The study group met in Shakertown, Kentucky, on February 1-2 to review the program descriptions, proposed agendas, evaluation design, and draft instruments. The group identified a name, Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT), as well as logos and terminology to describe the training components. A major outcome of the February meeting was the revision of the study group's scope of work.

  - Another meeting took place in Louisville, Kentucky, on March 1-2 to pilot two of the QUILT collegiums, to review the revised five-stage QUILT model, and to pilot two of the instruments. On March 2, superintendents from the six participating districts attended the meeting and received an update on progress. Also, during the second quarter of FY 90, study group members administered to 60 teachers the two written instruments: Questionnaire on Effective Classroom Questioning and Opinionnaire About Effective Classroom Questioning.

  - During the third quarter, participants were recruited to attend the pilot test of the QUILT materials; the opinionnaire and questionnaire instruments were administered and data analyses completed; and teachers were videotaped using questioning techniques during the course of a 15-minute lesson. During the week of June 17-22 at the State Leadership Center in Jabez, Kentucky, 20 Kentucky educators (teachers and administrators) participated in the pilot test of the three-day QUILT induction training, and several participated in the additional two days to pilot test the collegium materials.

  - During the fourth quarter, the QUILT induction manual and the questionnaire were revised, based on pilot test feedback. Work continued on the classroom observation instrument to establish interrater reliability. An instrument to assess student perceptions of classroom questioning was developed and piloted with 150 students. The questionnaire was revised and administered to 100 teachers in an attempt to improve reliability. The opinionnaire instrument has a reliability of .85. Selected KASA-AEL study group members presented a session on QUILT at the KASA annual conference and at the AEL Potpourri and Study

Group Conference. The QUILT induction training was piloted with 25 teachers in Huntington, West Virginia. The collegium materials were revised and sent for piloting in Warren County, Kentucky.

- Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration (TASSA)-AEL study group on priorities and needs of members of an umbrella association for school administrators

  - During the first quarter, the TASSA-AEL study group resumed its work on a membership survey. At a February meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, a task force of the study group completed the survey. AEL designed the layout for the survey, which was mailed to 2,000 school administrators in Tennessee during the second quarter. Three hundred and seventy-three surveys were returned. Consultant Jack Barnette began analyzing the data. Data analysis of the membership survey and a draft of the survey report were completed during the third quarter and sent to study group members for review. During the fourth quarter, the interpretation of the data analysis was completed, and a summary of the findings was written. Meetings with the study group were held to get feedback, plan for the final revisions to the report, and develop a dissemination plan for the report throughout the state and Region.

- Virginia Center for Educational Leadership (VCEL)-AEL study group on leadership

  - The VCEL-AEL study group's second teleconference on leadership, to study Barry Posner's book, The Leadership Challenge, was cancelled during the first quarter because of inclement weather. Posner's interview was taped, with five VCEL facilitators and one SGA staff member participating to ask questions. All five sites scheduled their meetings and used the videotapes instead of a live, interactive videoteleconference as originally planned. Facilitators from the five participating sites attended a study group meeting on February 15-16 in Lynchburg, Virginia, to plan for the next two teleconferences.

  - The study group conducted two final videoteleconferences during the second quarter. Five sites participated in the interviews with Terry Deal, coauthor of Corporate Cultures, and Denis Doyle, coauthor of Winning the Brain Race. In late May, 10 VCEL facilitators attended a retreat in Richmond, Virginia, to develop a facilitator's guide for seminars, in which the four books on leadership were discussed and during which videotapes of the authors were shown. The retreat yielded a draft of the facilitator's guide and detailed recommendations for editing the videotapes.

- During the third quarter, a first draft of the facilitator's guide and editing of the four teleconference videotapes were completed by SGA staff. Review copies of the guide were sent to those facilitators and VCEL staff who helped develop the guide at the May retreat. The edited masters of the videotapes were sent to the VCEL office where copies will be made and distributed.

- The fourth quarter of FY 90 saw the completion of the facilitator's guide, as well as reproduction of the four videotapes. VCEL plans to provide copies of the tapes and guide to every Virginia school division, and plans are being made to conduct regional training for facilitators in this school year.

- West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA)-AEL study group on parent involvement

  - During the first quarter, the WVASA-AEL study group on parent involvement held its first meeting on December 1-2, 1989, in Charleston, West Virginia. The group completed a variety of activities, including reading and studying about parent involvement, sharing the best parent involvement practices from each of the six participating districts, identifying several seminar topics for further development, and developing draft outlines for each of the five topic areas. Approximately 30 educators and parents attended the meeting.

  - The following activities were completed during the second quarter by the WVASA-AEL study group on parent involvement: (1) development of a three-hour seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement"; (2) pilot test of the seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement" with the study group; (3) final revisions of the seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement"; (4) statewide drive-in conference cosponsored by the West Virginia Department of Education, WVASA, and AEL on school advisory councils, presented by Jean Norman, director of the South Carolina School Council Assistance Project; (5) development of a three-hour seminar on "School Advisory Councils"; (6) plans to pilot and revise the seminar on "School Advisory Councils"; (7) analysis of completed surveys that were sent out during the first quarter on best practices for parent involvement; and (8) development of a document outline by consultant Helen Saunders, SGA staff, and study group members in which to present best practices.

  - During the third quarter, the WVASA-AEL study group pilot tested the seminar on "School Advisory Councils" with 34 participants in the Parent Advisory Workshop of the West Virginia Department of Education's Collaborative Institute in Charleston, West Virginia, on June 22-23. A draft report of the seminar on "School Advisory Councils" was completed and a copy sent to the task team for review. A training-for-trainers event for the seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement" was held on August 6 in Charleston, West Virginia, for approximately 30 West Virginia educators.

- A draft report of the seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement" was sent to study group members for review. A second training-for-trainers event was held on both WVASA seminars--"Rationale for Parent Involvement" and "School Advisory Councils"--on October 30 in South Charleston, West Virginia.

Activity 3: Providing Technical Assistance to School Administrators Through In-state Workshops, Conferences, and to the School Excellence Network

This activity includes the following: planning and conducting a Potpourri workshop and followup training, presenting awareness sessions, developing and revising one School Excellence Workshop, conducting training-for-trainers workshops, and providing technical assistance to the School Excellence Network.

- SGA sponsored nine training-for-trainers events on AEL workshop topics, a Regional Potpourri, one Regionwide training event with a LEAD project, and a study group conference in FY 90.
- There were 440 participants in the 12 training-for-trainers events in the FY 90 trainer followup survey. A total of 228 AEL trainers completed and returned their survey forms for a response rate of 52 percent. (Interestingly, this response rate is just two percentage points different than the FY 89 response rate.) The FY 90 trainers stated that they conducted a total of 56 replications of AEL workshops (i.e., second-tier training events). Further, respondents to the FY 90 trainer followup survey reported that there were 1,456 participants in those second-tier replication workshops.
- As a result of a West Virginia state planning meeting on April 9 with AEL staff, the West Virginia Education Association, WVASA, the West Virginia LEAD, and the West Virginia Department of Education, the first Collaborative Institute for School Success was held on June 21-23 in Charleston, West Virginia, and included seven training-for-trainers sessions on "At-Risk Students: The Dropout Problem," "Community Support Through Public Relations," "Educating the Preschooler," "Focusing on Motivation," "Marginal Learners," "Parent Involvement," and "Teacher as Decisionmaker." The training sessions involved 242 participants. A second Collaborative Institute for School Success was held on September 27-29 in Huntington, West Virginia, for approximately the same number of participants using the same seven AEL training-for-trainers workshops.

- The 1990 Potpourri Workshop was held in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 26-28. A study group conference was held in conjunction with the Potpourri. The four AEL School Excellence Workshops showcased were: "Community Support Through Public Relations," "Focusing on Motivation: The Need to Succeed," "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help Through Policy and Instruction," and "Teacher as Decisionmaker: Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School." More than 100 educators attended the Potpourri Workshop and study group conference. A total of 12 study groups presented abbreviated highlights of results from their study groups on topics such as effective questioning, parent involvement, effective leadership, etc.

- Oralie McAfee, consultant/developer of the "Educating the Preschooler" workshop, completed redevelopment of the training package.

Activity 4: Managing, Planning, and Collaborating with Other Lab Programs

This activity includes conducting SGA Program Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings; managing the program's administration, planning, evaluating, and budgeting; and cooperating/collaborating with other AEL programs.

- PAC meetings were held in January, May, July, and October 1990. Copies of meeting results were shared with OERI as appendices to each quarterly report. Summaries of key decisions at each meeting were shared with the PAC and AEL's Management Team.

- SGA staff met regularly with the internal evaluator on the refinement of the evaluation plan, data collection instruments, review of study group products, etc. SGA staff provided information to AEL's external evaluator, Western Michigan University.

- SGA staff collaborated with Classroom Instruction staff on nine training-for-trainers events during FY 90, in addition to the annual Potpourri and study group conference.

- SGA arranged three awareness presentations by the ERIC/CRESS staff for three SGA groups: WVASA's study group, the Kentucky LEAD Program Advisory Committee, and the annual conference of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals.

- SGA staff planned with two consultants and West Virginia School Boards Association staff the Select Seminar on Restructuring held in November at Canaan Valley in Davis, West Virginia. This effort was part of a study funded by the West Virginia State Legislature.

Task 3: Policy and Planning Center

Activity 1: Maintaining a Forum for CSSOs

The Center's forums are designed to give members of the Council on Policy and Planning, and at times, others if the Council chooses, an opportunity to learn more about timely issues.

- At the close of FY 89, Council members expressed interest in having time for learning more about current issues in the four member states. Therefore, discussion time at each advisory committee meeting in FY 90 included a brief review of education issues in each state, giving the Council yet another format option for forums.

- The Council embarked on the development of an issue matrix following the second-quarter meeting. Work continued in subsequent meetings. The hope is that the matrix can be used to guide decisions about future Center services.

- Given that an FY 87 forum discussion prompted the creation of the Center's Technology Collaborative, activities of the group are reported under Activity 1. The three cross-state projects identified in FY 88 by the group's members to be undertaken with Center coordination were completed in FY 90. These included a Regionwide survey of library media specialist training needs for fulfilling their expanded role in an information age, coordination of a jointly developed application for Star Schools funding, and the enrollment of students from other AEL states in Virginia's courses available by satellite.

Activity 2: Sponsoring Symposium of State Government Decisionmakers

Each year the Center sponsors a regional conference to explore the policy-related questions associated with a particular emerging issue.

- In FY 90, Council members decided to try a different format from previous years. A much smaller group would be expected to attend; invitations would be limited, in fact, to a maximum of five per state. The small-group, high-level format was wanted so that maximum interaction and discussion could occur. Council members attempted to identify an acceptable date for late summer or early fall. None could be found. A special briefing for policymakers from the four states had been sponsored by the Center in May on the Kentucky Education Reform Act. Since it served as a model for the new symposium format, Council members agreed that it would serve as the FY 90 symposium.

- The May 15 special briefing on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 featured as presenters four Kentucky decisionmakers centrally involved in either the development or implementation of the reform. They met with visiting policymakers from the three other AEL states, including a Chief State School Officer, an assistant state superintendent, the chairmen of the House Education committees from two states, a deputy secretary of education, and the general counsel to a state superintendent. The discussion focused on events leading up to the court ruling, the political structures created to design the reform package, major aspects of the legislation, and steps being taken to implement the mandated changes.

- As a result of the symposium, the Governor's Commission on Educational Opportunity for all Virginians asked Center staff for help in identifying content and speakers for a daylong commission meeting that would focus on the Kentucky reform effort.

- A report of the event--Proceedings: Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, Special Policymaker Briefing--was prepared and delivered to OERI and shared with all participants.

Activity 3: Providing Policy Trend and Synthesis Services

The primary vehicle for providing policy trend and synthesis information is through the Center's series of issue papers.

- During FY 90, Center staff worked to get consultant experts to complete work on a number of issue papers still outstanding. As a result, eight papers were published during FY 90. These included:

    - Computers and Improving Basic Skills by Charles Kinzer and Elizabeth Baker, a joint publication of AEL's Policy and Planning Center and the Technology Learning Center at Vanderbilt University;

    - Delegating Authority, Demanding Accountability by Patricia Ceperley, the Center's staff associate;

    - Choice in American Education by John Witte, a joint publication of AEL's Policy and Planning Center and the Robert M. LaFollette Institute of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison;

    - Local Control of Schools: Is Local Governance a Viable Option? by Charles Faber, a joint publication of AEL's Policy and Planning Center and the Policy Analysis Center for Kentucky Education, University of Kentucky;

- *Recapturing the Policymaking Function of State Boards of Education* by Gary Badarak of the Riverside, California, Unified School District;
- *Restructuring America's Schools* by Joseph Murphy, a joint publication of AEL's Policy and Planning Center and the National Center for Educational Leadership, Vanderbilt University;
- *Review of Public School Finance in the Appalachia Educational Laboratory States* by Kern Alexander of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; and
- *The Change Process and Site-Based Decisionmaking* by Gene Hall and Gary Galluzzo of the University of Northern Colorado.

- Given the length of time that experience has proved as necessary for production of a quality product, Council members instructed staff to develop four issue packets instead of issue papers for FY 90. In subsequent discussions, the Council requested that Gene Hall be asked to write a paper that focuses on the change process and the implementation of site-based decisionmaking.

- The paper on school finance by Kern Alexander was featured in the lead article of the August 1990 issue of *R & D Preview*.

Activity 4: Maintaining Communications with Region's Policymakers

Both publications and face-to-face interactions are used to maintain communications with key decisionmakers.

- The Center's "Policy Briefs" was reformatted late in FY 89 as a stand-alone publication. "Policy Briefs" had been produced as an insert to *The Link*. The Council on Policy and Planning directed the Center to continue preparing "Policy Briefs" in the 11" x 17" format for FY 90. The new publication is sent to the Center's portion of *The Link* mailing list in separate mailings.

- "Policy Briefs" in FY 90 included issues on the controversy surrounding the use of student test scores for accountability purposes, the Kentucky reform act and the philosophical changes embodied by it, school consolidation, and the national education goals and the importance of goals in education improvement.

- Monthly packets of "R & D Notes" were distributed each month to all Council members, key state department staff, and other key decisionmakers throughout the four states.

- The Center was asked in FY 90 by West Virginia's secretary of education and the arts to coordinate the work of a special task force created by the secretary to develop a statewide plan to govern distance education.

- Center staff worked jointly with staff from Research for Better Schools to help member states prepare for a Region III/CSSO retreat organized by the Secretary's Regional Representative D. Kay Wright from Philadelphia. Staff from the two Labs designed a one-page background sheet for each topic chosen for discussion at the August 22-23 meeting in Williamsburg. The Laboratory director and the Center director attended the retreat.

Activity 5: Managing the Policy and Planning Center

Several activities are associated with managing the operation of the Policy and Planning Center. The Center also collaborates with other AEL program/centers in the sponsorship of events.

- Staff worked with the School Services Center staff in a number of evaluation-related tasks during FY 90, including completing the FY 89 self-assessment and the FY 90 evaluation questions. In addition, Policy and Planning Center staff finalized instruments and client lists for Quad Call interviews. Staff also participated in meetings with third-party evaluators from Western Michigan University.

- The Center cosponsored with the Rural, Small Schools program the fall conference, "The Dollar Dilemma: Fiscal Policies for Rural, Small Schools." Center staff identified and invited key policymakers from the Region to serve as reactors to papers presented by school finance scholars.

- Center staff assisted the School Governance and Administration program in the Select Seminar for School Board Governance, a collaborative activity of the program and the West Virginia School Boards Association for the West Virginia Legislature.

Task 4: Professional Preparation and Research Program

During FY 90, the Professional Preparation and Research (PP&R) program conducted three activities, responsive primarily to Task 4, creating R & D-based programs for school improvement.

Activity 1: Collaborating with State ACTEs

The PP&R program assisted state Associations of Colleges for Teacher Education (ACTEs) to plan conferences with an R & D focus, published and distributed state ACTE newsletters as wraparounds on The Link, maintained a Minigrant Review Panel, and sponsored an annual PP&R work conference. The program also cosponsored with each state ACTE at least one inter-institutional faculty study group.

- The program director participated in the annual spring conferences of KACTE and TACTE. At the TACTE conference, he presented an invited paper on the future of teacher education. The director also participated in the annual fall conferences of VACTE and WVACTE. In addition, he participated in other state ACTE meetings and communicated regularly with association officials in each state.

- KACTE, VACTE, and WVACTE provided copy for their association newsletters for at least one quarter; AEL produced and distributed those newsletters as wraparounds on The Link. TACTE continued to produce and distribute its newsletter separately. New newsletter editors were appointed in each state, and more regular association communication is anticipated.

- Members of the AEL Minigrant Review Panel reviewed the 18 applications received in the single-round 1990 Minigrant competition. Reviewer ratings served as the primary basis for the PP&R Advisory Committee's decisions to award nine AEL Minigrants this year.

- Planning for the Fourth Annual PP&R Working Conference began at the July 21 meeting of the PP&R Advisory Committee in Lexington, Kentucky. The president and vice president of each state ACTE, PP&R Advisory Committee members, and program staff were invited to attend the one-day, fly-in meeting at the Pittsburgh Airport Hotel; 12 conferees attended. Participants reviewed the outcomes of state ACTE/PP&R collaboration to date, shared insights gained from that experimental effort, and explored new ideas to test in the 1991 work plan.

- PP&R received final reports from the four state ACTE/PP&R study groups that were formed at the First Annual PP&R Working Conference. One of these groups, the TACTE/PP&R study group, will continue its work until the end of AEL's contract and report results of its final survey at the TACTE fall meeting. The KACTE/

PP&R study group produced a monograph, Reconsidering the Role of Field and Clinical Experience in the Professional Education of Teachers: A Sourcebook, as its final report. Earlier the KACTE/ PP&R study group members had presented their work at a symposium at the AACTE annual meeting in Chicago. Outcomes of the other study groups were more modest, but each proved to be a worthwhile activity.

Activity 2: Operating the Minigrant Program

Since FY 90 is the last year of AEL's five-year Regional Lab contract, all work had to be concluded by November 30. This meant that only one round of the Minigrant competition could be held, because awardees had to complete their work and file final reports before year's end.

- The Minigrant Review Panel reviewed the FY 90 applications and provided ratings to the PP&R Advisory Committee.
- A special meeting of the PP&R Advisory Committee was convened on February 22 in conjunction with AACTE's annual meeting in Chicago.
- The one-round FY 90 Minigrant competition attracted 18 applications and a total of nine grants was awarded.
- A great deal of effort was devoted in FY 90 to editing and publishing Minigrant final reports, because many projects initiated in prior years concluded in FY 90.

Activity 3: Directing Communications and Project Management

- The PP&R "contact" at each state ACTE-member institution continued to serve as a special communications link between the program and each higher education institution's faculty.
- Copies of "R & D Notes" were distributed to program "contacts" on a monthly basis throughout FY 90.
- Copies of "PP&R Connection" were prepared quarterly and distributed as inserts in The Link.
- PP&R staff prepared agendas for four regular meetings and one special meeting of the PP&R Advisory Committee during FY 90. Following each meeting, summaries of discussions and actions were prepared and distributed.
- Appropriate communications were maintained with state ACTE officials throughout the year. Both formal and informal meetings were held with state ACTE officials and executive committees.
- Work of the program was regularly reported to the AEL staff and to the Management Team at their respective meetings throughout FY 90.

Task 4: School Services Center

Activity 1: Delivering Services to the Region's Educators

FY 90 services provided by the School Services Center (SSC) were: management of the AEL Resource Center, coordination of the Lab's response to general service requests, operation of the AEL Network of Schools, and publishing AEL's quarterly newsletter, The Link. Highlights of these services follow.

- In FY 90, the Resource Center received 1,403 requests for materials, which resulted in the dissemination of 5,667 documents. Staff also processed 390 information search requests, eight less than last year. Requests for materials were slightly higher than FY 89 requests. Evaluation forms returned by clients give the the Resource Center very high ratings for usefulness, credibility, responsiveness, and accessibility.

- During FY 90, staff responded to an average of 36 general requests for services per quarter. The requests included a broad range of topics. For example:

  - The Citizens Advisory Council to the Cabell County, West Virginia, Board of Education requested assistance from AEL in planning a telephone survey of residents in Cabell County.

  - Various West Virginia grant agencies, education organizations, and child advocacy groups asked AEL's assistance in thinking through alternative approaches to educating the preschooler.

  - The West Virginia Governor's Office requested AEL staff serve as facilitators and resource persons for the Education Summit and the nine town meetings that set the stage for the West Virginia Legislature's special session on education.

- The AEL Network of Schools, begun in FY 88, is now comprised of 40 schools and districts throughout AEL's four-state Region. Members represent large as well as small districts; and rural, suburban, and urban areas. The AEL Network of Schools was established in response to the needs and interests expressed by network members. During FY 90, staff developed information for members on cooperative learning and computer-assisted instruction for elementary students, primarily. A network memo, conference calls, and subgroup meetings were used to maintain communications among network members.

- Following the trend of this contract period, fewer than expected overview presentations were requested of SSC about the work of the Laboratory. The burden of overviews is borne by the other programs and their Board advisory committee members--a very favorable development.

- Four issues of the AEL newsletter, The Link, were published during FY 90, including a special issue on rural school finance. Approximately 8,000 copies of each issue were distributed. Findings of a Link readership survey were that an 8 1/2" x 11" format and three-hole punched paper would be valued changes, but that satisfaction with the content continues to be very high. Staff propose to implement readers' suggested format changes in FY 91.

Activity 2: Producing and Providing R & D Products

FY 90 R & D products produced by SSC were: two occasional papers, three staff development sessions, and an annual update concerning the two multistate studies.

- In FY 90, staff completed a survey of early childhood education and care programs in the member states. The survey pointed out the difficulty states are having in coordinating the efforts of the many different agencies and organizations that are trying to address the needs of preschoolers.

- Consultants completed a study of substance abuse programs in the member states in FY 90. Their study pointed out a need for greater coordination among service providers. Also needed are ongoing technical assistance and training for service providers and systematic program evaluation.

- An update concerning these two studies is being submitted to OERI. Results of the studies are being disseminated as occasional papers of the Laboratory.

- SSC presented three professional development sessions for Lab staff in FY 90. The first was a half-day workshop on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 presented by Kentucky education officials in December 1989. The second was two half-day workshops by David Winefordner, Director Emeritus of AEL's Career Exploration and Planning Program (CEPP), on the upgraded CEPP curriculum and materials now being marketed by Meridian Education Corporation of Bloomington, Illinois. The third was a two-day workshop on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences-Personal Computer now available to all staff through the AEL Resource Center. John Williams, coordinator of the statistics lab at Virginia Tech, presented the workshop. All three sessions were evaluated as helpful by participants.

Activity 3: Coordinating Laboratory Evaluation and Preparation of Required Reports to OERI

SSC staff assisted program managers in designing, carrying out, and reporting the evaluation of their programs. Staff also coordinated the work of the external evaluator, the Western Michigan University

Evaluation Center. As well, staff coordinated the preparation of quarterly, annual, and special reports to OERI.

- AEL's FY 90 evaluation plans had to be modified substantially in April due to a technical direction memo from OERI that changed AEL's deliverables and due dates. These changes necessitated renegotiating our FY 90 external evaluation contract and rescheduling internal evaluation work so that the new final report design presented in the memo could be accommodated with a minimum of disruption to the programs.

- Staff assisted program managers in completing the evaluation of their programs and coordinated the assembling of their copy into the quarterly reports and this final report.

- Staff coordinated the work of the external evaluator that resulted in the FY '90 Report: External Evaluation of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, provided as a separately bound document to OERI.

- Staff submitted 16 documents to ERIC during FY 90. Listings of the documents are provided in the quarterly reports.

Activity 4: Managing the School Services Center

Managing the School Services Center involved planning and budgeting, coordinating with internal and external groups, and overseeing and evaluating the day-to-day operations of the Center.

- As part of the regular FY 90 quarterly meetings of the AEL Board of Directors, staff met with the SSC Advisory Committee. The committee advised on such matters as the selection of multistate study and occasional paper topics, staff development programs, expansion of the Network of Schools, and the new format of The Link newsletter.

- SSC staff collaborated with numerous external groups working to address educational needs of children in the member states and beyond. Chambers of Commerce; local school districts and their business partners; state and national media; and professional education associations such as the American Educational Research Association, the National Rural Education Association, and the Southern Regional Education Association were some of the groups with which staff collaborated in FY 90.

- The SSC director met regularly with the AEL Management Team to coordinate SSC's work with the other AEL programs and with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools.

Task 5: Collaboration

Activity 1: OERI/REL Collaboration

This activity provided OERI the opportunity to convene Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) representatives to collaborate on areas of common interest.

- There were no OERI-initiated Task 5 meetings in FY 90.

Activity 2: REL Networking

This activity encouraged and facilitated communications between and among the REL contractors. Providing and maintaining communication channels among the contractors and OERI is regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition for collaboration to occur.

- Staff monitored the Regional Educational Laboratory and OERI messages on the GTE Network and engaged in communications with the Labs and OERI, as needed, using regular and electronic mail, as well as telephone and face-to-face communications.
- AEL distributed 12 issues of CSAP blurbs, "R & D Notes," during FY 90. Total distribution of the 12 issues was 15,093 sets. The Lab submitted a total of 16 documents to CSAP this year. The titles of these documents are listed in AEL's quarterly reports to OERI.

Activity 3: Thematic Collaboration

This activity empowered the Laboratories to initiate and maintain ad hoc collaborative groups that address issues of common concern. A collaborative group is defined as at least three participating organizations, two of which are OERI-supported.

- Staff continued to participate in a variety of thematic collaboratives during FY 90. Continuing collaborations included the Task 3 coordinators, technology coordinators, Regional Educational Laboratory evaluation coordinators, higher order thinking skills consultants, and at-risk children consultants. New collaboratives were formed to work on the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory/Public Broadcasting System series on restructuring, a synthesis of research and best practice on restructuring, a Region III retreat for Chief State School Officers, and AEL's symposium on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Details concerning each of these collaboratives are provided in AEL's quarterly reports.

Task 5: Rural, Small Schools Program

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program operated under one regular contract during the first ten months of FY 90 and under a continuation contract for the final two months of this year. Many activities overlapped, but some activities are unique to one or the other contract. This report is organized by similar work activities with the contractual activities and workscopes referenced. The first contract was the third based on the rural initiative and is called Phase III.

Establish or Strengthen Working Relationships with Rural Co-Partners
(Activity 1, workscope b, Phase III; Task 1, Continuation)

Two distinct types of activities were involved in working with co-partners. They included the following:

- Staff made numerous conference presentations and were active in regional and national associations related to rural education in FY 90. Among them were the National Rural Education Association, the Southern Rural Education Association, and the National Rural and Small Schools Consortium. RSS also collaborated with other agencies and institutions such as the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, Virginia Tech, Radford University, Tennessee Technological University, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the West Virginia School Boards Association, the West Virginia Teachers Association, the Tennessee Teachers Association, and the Ohio Valley Cooperative in Kentucky.

- Staff solicited and edited eight articles that will comprise a special issue of the Journal of Rural and Small Schools devoted to rural education and economics. The issue will include an article and introduction by RSS staff. Other contributors include staff of another Regional Laboratory and a former ERIC director.

The School-Community Improvement Process
(Activity 2, workscopes a-c, Phase III, Task 2, Supplemental)

The Phase III contract called for replication of the School-Community Improvement Process by select higher education institutions. In addition, RSS staff was to provide technical assistance to the original test sites that wanted to continue using the process by having the steering committee start a new cycle. The following highlights that work:

- Three of the sites were very successful in that school improvement projects were completed with positive results. The fourth site was concerned with issues of bare survival and found it difficult to allocate the resources and energy to a school improvement project. The most successful site was one in which the superintendent was new to the district and used the activities in the model to develop strong community support. This was the only site that requested a continuation of the process beyond the first school improvement activity. A variety of circumstances such as consolidation prevented others from establishing new activities. Although the needs assessment was universally hailed as outstanding, the school-community steering committee was considered a duplication of existing advisory committees by several administrators who were approached by staff regarding the establishment of additional demonstration sites.

- One of the original test sites elected to continue using the school-community improvement process. However, its original steering committee preferred to continue working on the improvement project (constructing a new building for the middle school). Therefore, a new committee was formed and the building of a database about the county was identified as the improvement project for FY 90.

Southside Virginia Library Network
(Activity 2, workscope d, Phase III; Task 3, Continuation)

Work with the library network was very successful in FY 90. The following information highlights that work:

- The logs and anecdotal records about the use of ERIC on CD-ROM in the library network indicated that both students and faculty do use the ERIC system when it is available in local education agencies. It provides a strong, professional library, as well as a broad range of references to assist students in completing classroom assignments. RSS staff arranged for schools in the network to get licenses at a discount to copy on videotape film clips from a videodisc collection called The Video Encyclopedia of the Twentieth Century. Teachers in six high schools took advantage of the opportunity to enrich their instructional programs with this new resource.

- Staff developed a prototype of a videotape showcasing ERIC on CD-ROM for use in workshops and presentations regarding the library network. During the year, the videotape was shown at four presentations and an ERIC directors meeting. Comments by participants in these meetings were very positive and provided the basis for an improved version. Staff recorded additional videotape and developed an improved version of the videotape of ERIC on CD-ROM. Portions of the videotape were used to develop a prototype about online access of college library catalogs by local schools.

A Special Project to Monitor the Kentucky School Reform Movement
(Activity 2, workscope d; Task 3, Continuation)

This project was designed to document the initial reactions to the massive Kentucky education reform legislation. The impact of this reform on the rural schools of Kentucky is projected to be impressive and in need of this type of documentation.

- Pam Coe and Patricia Kannapel conducted a special project to monitor the initial impact and reaction to the massive Kentucky school reform legislation on six school rural school districts in that state. A special report was prepared to explicate the findings of the study.

Conference on Rural School Finance
(Activity 2, workscope d; Task 3 Continuation)

Rural school finance has been identified as a major concern of educators in the AEL Region. This conference was designed to assist policymakers and educators to understand and cope with this problem.

- A conference titled "Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools: The Dollar Dilemma" was held on October 2, 1990, in Roanoke, Virginia. Presenters included nine recognized experts in the field of school finance. The conference was cosponsored by Virginia Tech, Radford University, AEL's Policy and Planning Center, and the RSS program. The conference was attended by 160 educators from 16 states. Participants included staff from three other Regional Laboratories, two Chief State School Officers, college professors, legislators, board members, parents, teachers, members of the AEL Board of Directors, and two individuals from OERI. Evaluation of the conference by participants was extremely positive. The conference was videotaped by staff from Radford University, and edited videotapes of the presentations were developed. AEL staff edited the complete conference papers and submitted them for publication in a special issue of the *Journal of School Finance*.

Collect, Generate and Disseminate Information About Rural Education and the Region
(Activity 3, workscope a, Phase III; Task 5 and 6, Continuation)

These activities have been ongoing since the initial rural initiative contract. The following are the highlights of that work for FY 90:

- Four issues of the "Rural School Companion" were prepared and mailed as inserts to *The Link*, AEL's newsletter. In addition, requests for information about consolidation were filled by collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, AEL's Policy and Planning Center, and the Resource Center. A packet of materials was assembled and provided to clients upon request. All materials developed by RSS have been submitted to the ERIC system.

- The electronic files of information about rural education in the Region were maintained and expanded. Documents were added to the paper files and the accession bibliography on rural education now contains more than 600 citations.

- A database of promising practices was developed and selected practices were published in From One Rural School to Another. Profiles of the rural schools in each state were developed and published. All documents were disseminated widely in the Region and submitted to the ERIC system.

A Study of West Virginia High Schools
(Task 4, Continuation)

This 1990 study added to the rural databases and provided an opportunity to see if such studies would yield useful, new knowledge about rural education. The successful study provides a pattern for further studies in the other states of the Region.

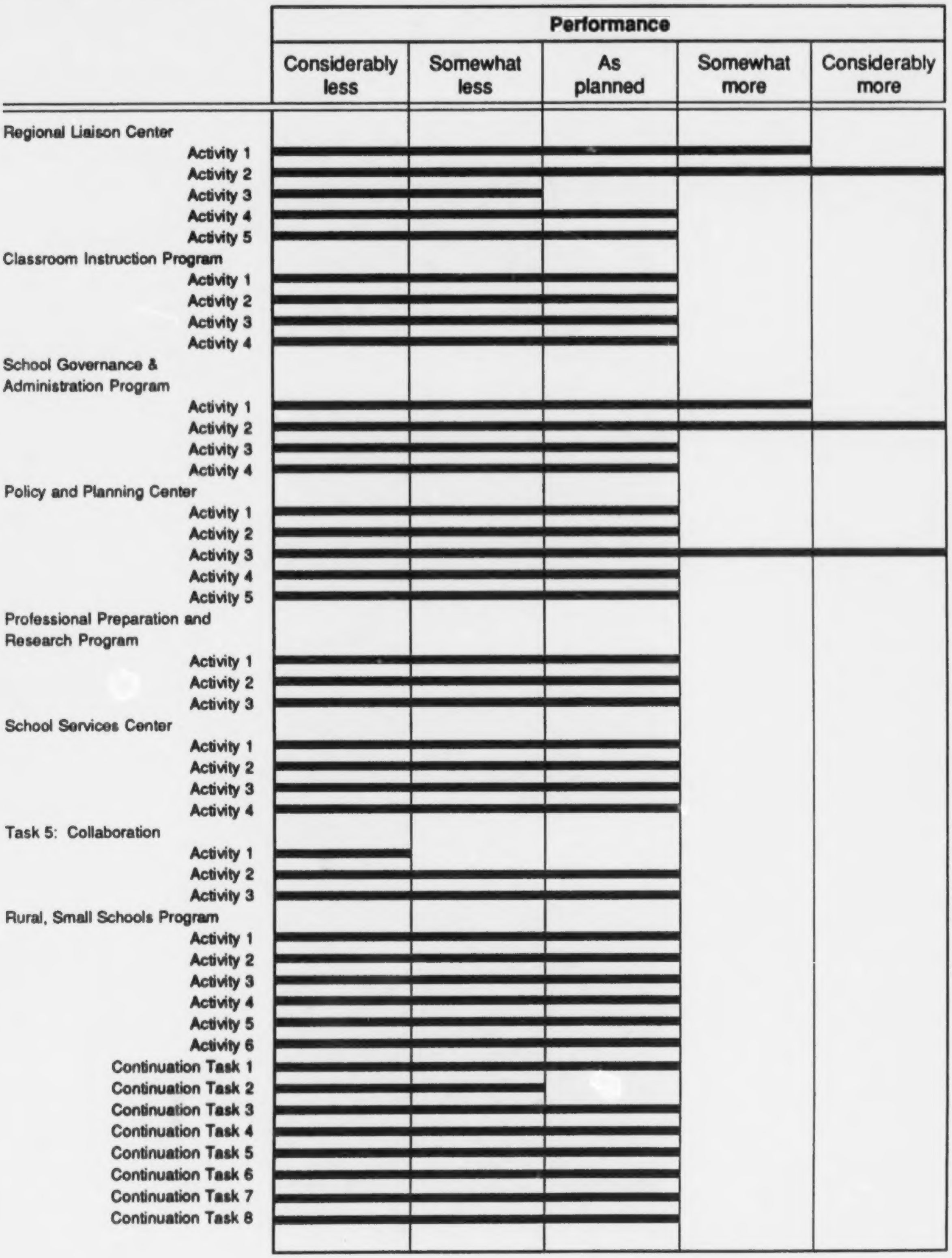
- Mary Hughes developed a database of the 151 high schools in West Virginia and ranked them to identify the highest ten percent and the lowest ten percent using three performance measures: percentage dropouts, percentage attendance rate, and eight state achievement test measures. She found that the highest ranking schools had an average dropout rate one-fifth the lowest ranking schools; the highest ranking schools had two-thirds the number of students receiving free or reduced-price meals; four percent more staff with a masters + 15 hours; and almost two-thirds higher achievement score levels than the lowest ranking schools. Sixty percent of the highest ranking schools had an enrollment of fewer than 300 students and 66 percent of the lowest ranked schools had an enrollment greater than 300 students.

The Coalition for Rural West Virginians
(Activity 2, workscope d, Phase III; Task 1, Continuation)

Although this work has not yet resulted in a successful coalition, the interest of many individuals and organizations confirmed the notion that such coalitions are needed in rural states.

- Early in 1990, AEL staff collaborated with the West Virginia School Boards Association in initiating the Coalition for Rural West Virginians, an organization of representatives from the many state organizations and institutions that provide services to rural citizens. It was based on the premise that education and the many other human services were competing for the same limited finances and all could benefit by cooperatively addressing the problem. Also, the organization was to examine the problem of the unserved in rural areas. AEL planned to monitor and document the establishment and operation of the coalition so that other states might replicate the model if it proved successful. However, the organization disintegrated when the person elected as chair of the coalition resigned and left the state. Also contributing to the demise of the organization was the attention required of various leaders in the state to a statewide teacher strike and a special legislative session that passed major school reform legislation. Efforts by AEL staff to revive the organization have been to no avail.

FY 90 Overall Project Performance Report



SECTION B: FOURTH-QUARTER FY 90 REPORT OF LABORATORY PERFORMANCE

The purpose of this section is to provide the FY 90 fourth-quarter report of AEL's performance as Regional Educational Laboratory for Region 3. Following the presentation of governance, management, and planning and evaluation work under Task 1, each of the seven projects is reviewed under the task area with which it is associated.

Task 1: Governance, Management, Planning, and Evaluation

Task 1 includes the development of effective governance, management, planning, and evaluation systems for the Laboratory. Highlights of actions during this quarter follow.

Governance, Management, and Staffing

- The AEL Board of Directors held its regular fourth-quarter meeting in Roanoke, Virginia, on September 30-October 1. All actions of the Board are reported in the minutes of the meeting, which are maintained in corporate files at the Laboratory's headquarters.

- The AEL Executive Committee met on September 30 during the regular fourth-quarter meeting of the Board of Directors. All recommendations and actions of the Executive Committee are reported to the Board; therefore, they are included in the minutes of the Board meeting.

- The Board's program and center advisory committees for AEL's Regional Educational Laboratory projects met on October 1 in Roanoke, Virginia, during the regular fourth-quarter meeting.

- During the fourth quarter, the AEL Management Team held both regular and special meetings. Topics discussed at these meetings included plans for completing FY 86-90 work, staff evaluations for 1990, project updates, preparations for the fourth-quarter Board meeting, and development of responses to OERI negotiation/clarification questions regarding AEL's 1991-95 proposal.

- No changes occured in AEL's staffing pattern during the fourth quarter.

Needs Sensing and Planning

- During the fourth quarter, staff continued entering the scanned, education-related newspaper articles from the Region's capital city newspapers into the AEL needs sensing database.

- Given that this was the final quarter of the five-year contract, there were no planning actions completed relative to it.

Self-Assessment and Evaluation

- Staff completed summarizing qualitative and quantitative data from all past self-assessment reports as input for the final report. These information and data summaries are provided to AEL staff preparing various sections of the final report.

- Staff completed several evaluation summaries for project staff to use in evaluating their projects' activities. For example, evaluation staff conducted the annual trainers workshop feedback form survey and summarized the results for project directors.

- Western Michigan University (WMU) staff completed the draft of the FY 90 external evaluation report and sent it to AEL staff for review. AEL staff reviewed the draft external evaluation report and mailed a copy containing suggestions back to the WMU authors. The final WMU report, FY '90 Final Report: External Evaluation of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, was submitted to AEL before the end of the last quarter of the fiscal year. It is a separately bound document not submitted with the AEL final report, per the OERI directive.

Task 2: Regional Liaison Center

Activity 1: Presenting Information

This activity provided strategies and procedures for disseminating information about AEL and relevant R & D about educational improvement to underrepresented groups in the Region.

- Staff disseminated information packets to 31 conferees at the Maternal Infant Health Outreach regional conference, conducted a session on how to organize and implement needs sensing/assessment workshops with parents, and sponsored a consultant who distributed materials about readiness skills for preschoolers to each of the participants.

- Ron Whitlock, programmer at WCVK, a radio station located in Bowling Green, Kentucky, arranged for the RLC director to share in a talk show format on Saturday, October 27, 1990, to inform the public about AEL in general, and to describe parental and community involvement activities being carried out in Warren County (Kentucky).

- Staff obtained permission to reproduce a historical document that identified, by photograph and biography, all of the Black congressional members in the United State Congress from 1830 to to 1989. Staff distributed 140 copies at the Haywood County (Tennessee) Branch, NAACP annual banquet on October 26, 1990. Similarly, 75 copies each were disseminated at Bowling Green and Owensboro, Kentucky, on October 28 and November 4, respectively (see project files).

- Gena Carter Hunter, Tennessee State Department of Education, requested that 250 copies of a document (utilizing materials that had been prepared for multicultural workshops during 1988 through 1990) be made available at the education workshops at the Annual Tennessee Legislative Caucus in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on November 15-17, 1990. There were more than 300 participants in attendance (see project files).

- RLC's administrative assistant completed the major input of membership information and the first set of mailing labels were provided for the West Virginia Coalition of Adult Literacy Advocate Groups during this quarter. The labels make possible selective and mass mailings to the membership(s) of the Coalition.

- Staff attended a recognition dinner hosted by the West Virginia Adult Literacy Coalition on September 13, 1990, to accept a public service award for the Lab from the Literacy Coalition.

- AEL, through the participation of the RLC director as a member of the Charleston Job Corps executive committee, continued to make its contributions to the educational excellence of young adults in the Corps. Betty James also served as a consultant and judged academic competition on July 20 for the Region III Summer Gold Games (Job Corps students) held in Charleston, West Virginia.

- The final field test of the AIDS education manual, designed to stem the tide of AIDS in the Black community and among other high-risk populations, was conducted at the AEL facilities. The manual has been approved by the Kanawha Residents United to Stop AIDS (KRUSAIDS) for final production. Copies of the final draft of the manual will be available, at cost, through the AEL Resource Center.

- RLC facilitated two meetings in June and July with members of the subcommittee of the Black Summit Leadership conference to explore long-term programmatic processes for involving community groups, leaders, and individuals in school improvement activities.

- RLC staff continue to maintain participant lists for each sponsored meeting, workshop, and conference whenever possible. Followup procedures are implemented to establish regular contact and/or share the names with other programs and centers. Requests for information are given priority.

- As indicated in prior quarterly reports, the Urban Education Conference was a one-time event in staff development held in conjunction with the inter-Laboratory Urban Education Network annual meeting hosted by AEL during its role as lead Laboratory in FY 88.

Activity 2: Convening Groups

Events were both initiated and cosponsored to involve large numbers of minorities and underrepresented individuals and groups in the educational improvements processes and activities.

- RLC staff worked with nine Maternal Infant Health Outreach program sites in AEL's Region in cosponsoring a three-day training conference in Charleston, West Virginia, on September 26-28, 1990.

- The Center director collaborated with members of the governor's statewide task force on two occasions to facilitate public forums on the educational needs of West Virginians. RLC's director traveled to Charles Town, West Virginia, on July 17, 1990, to assist in coordinating a question-and-answer session for the governor and members of the Black community, and to serve as facilitator for one of several large community groups in the Berkeley and Jefferson county areas.

- Two meetings of the Educational Subcommittee of the Black Summit Leadership Conference were held as indicated under Activity 1. Members of the committee have met with Steve Haid, state secretary of education, and David Acord, the new superintendent of schools in Kanawha County, to explore the possibility of a cooperative effort to create a school improvement project in Kanawha County that could withstand changes in personnel or administrative directions.

- The urban education annual reports from FY 88 and FY 89 were summarized and incorporated into an analytical document on the successes, problems, and implications over the past three years in implementing urban- and community-based educational improvement projects and activities.

Activity 3: Collaborating on the Urban Education Network

The RLC director serves as AEL's coordinator for collaborative efforts among the nine Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) in their urban education and kids-at-risk activities.

- The REL collaborative Task 5 theme coordinators have agreed to cosponsor and support the 1991 National Dropout Network conference. A bulk mailing was prepared and disseminated within AEL's Region concerning the conference. James is serving as the prime contact person for the RELs.

- Staff met with coordinators from other RELs on September 12-13 and October 10-11 in a continued effort to develop plans for recruiting more minorities into practical R & D activities in the Labs and Centers.

Activity 4: Maintaining Communications

This activity is now reported under the School Services Center.

Activity 5: Managing RLC

This activity was designed to enhance effective and proficient management, budgeting, and evaluating of RLC activities.

- The RLC director participates in Management Team meetings on a regular basis with regard to budget and program matters. Project directors provide and request input on program/center activities. Technical assistance and administrative oversight on matters of recruitment, selection, and hiring are provided on an as-needed basis.

- RLC staff continued to seek out opportunities to involve individuals from underrepresented groups in areas of AEL's activities when those opportunities are made available by project directors.

- The Center Advisory Committee met in Roanoke, Virginia, in conjunction with AEL's quarterly Board of Directors' meeting. Members were provided a calendar of completed events and copies of related products and materials. Upcoming events were discussed, evaluated, and approved based on their relevance to the proposed work and activities of the Center. The technical and business proposal for a new five-year funding cycle was discussed in detail and presented to the total Board for approval.

- A final draft of the document identifying RLC's work and accomplishments up through the second quarter of 1990 was presented to the advisory committee members for total program review.

Task 2: Classroom Instruction Program

For FY 90, the Classroom Instruction (CI) program conducts four activities, responsive primarily to Task 2, working with and through organizations to improve schools and classrooms.

Activity 1: Establish and Maintain Communication Channels Between the Program and Teachers and Other Service Providers

This activity has three workscopes to provide one- and two-way communication to individual teachers and through associations to teachers throughout the Region.

- The Classroom Instruction Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members coordinate or develop articles dealing with programs and practices involving teachers in their states for one "Focus on Instruction" insert to The Link. Jackie Romeo, West Virginia Education Association representative to the CI PAC, coordinated the acquisition of contributions from West Virginia educators for the fourth-quarter insert. Additional articles were developed by West Virginia educators who indicated interest in submitting copy on the 1989 "Focus on Instruction" readership survey. For the fourth quarter, CI's insert was 12 pages and included the contributions of 14 educators. "Focus on Instruction" was published as scheduled and mailed in November to more than 2,300 readers.

- Mary Ann Blankenship, editor of the KEA News, included in the October 1990 issue of the newsletter a description of the Kentucky Education Association (KEA)-AEL Early Childhood Resource Kit, a compilation of more than 100 articles, journals, position papers, and other print information on assisting the development of pre-K through grade one children. Information on borrowing the kit, an FY 90 study group product, from a KEA field office or Early Childhood Regional Training Center was included in the article, which was disseminated to the association's 31,632 members.

- The November 1990 KEA News contained an article updating KEA positions on various aspects of the 1990 Kentucky Education Reform Act, including ungraded programs. This article mentioned the KEA-AEL study group on ungraded primary programs, which is also a KEA ad hoc committee. The study group's product, a compilation of case studies of several such programs throughout the United States, will be published in the spring of 1991.

- NEA Today, November 1990 issue, contained an article titled "Labs for Learning," which featured AEL's work with the Virginia Education Association on the development and publication of Teaching Grade Combination Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices, a CI study group product published in November 1990. Michele

Milden, a member of the Virginia Education Association (VEA)-AEL Grade Combination Study Group, was interviewed by National Education Association (NEA) reporter Stefanie Weiss after Milden helped pass a New Business Item at the 1990 NEA Representative Assembly calling on NEA to research the educational impact of elementary combination classes. Included in the same article were comments from John Sanders, AEL deputy executive director, on the Lab's purpose and work in the Region; and from Helen Rolfe, VEA's instruction and professional development director, on AEL's assistance to Virginia educators. CI staff contributed information on study groups and supplied contact information for Milden and Rolfe, which led to the article being received by NEA's two million members.

- More than 206 contacts were made by CI staff with educators during the fourth quarter. The following descriptions detail the extent of these correspondence and phone communications.

  - Kentucky: Thirty-six educators received information from CI staff during the fourth quarter. CI staff responded to 14 teacher, 11 administrator, 11 association staff, and other requests for information on topics such as Potpourri '90 details, ungraded primary programs, alternatives to corporal punishment, and site-based decisionmaking.

  - Tennessee: During the fourth quarter, CI staff corresponded with 33 educators. Information searches, articles, and copies of AEL products on topics such as year-round schools, student motivation, and peer coaching were provided to 15 teachers, 8 administrators, and 10 association staff and others.

  - Virginia: CI staff provided information to 53 educators during the fourth quarter. Information on topics such as grouping, parent/community involvement, and cooperative learning were provided to 34 teachers, 4 administrators, and 15 association staff.

  - West Virginia: A fourth-quarter total of 49 contacts was made between CI staff and West Virginia educators. These included requests for information on topics such as class size, mentoring, community service, and other educational questions; 16 were from teachers, 20 from administrators, and 13 from association staff and others.

  - Other: CI staff corresponded with 35 individuals and organizations outside the Region. Information was provided on topics such as humanities grants and community service. Eight papers on parent/community involvement were developed and sent to educators on the National Education Association's Mastery in Learning School Renewal Network, an electronic network in which CI staff participate as the Parent Involvement Researcher Site. Twenty-eight information requests were answered on the Network.

- WATS calls: During the fourth quarter of FY 90, CI staff received a total of 212 incoming calls on the Lab's WATS lines. Of these, 46 came from West Virginia clients, while 166 were contacts by educators in the remaining three states served. CI staff made 55 long-distance calls within the state and 141 to clients outside West Virginia.

Activity 2: Providing Training Opportunities

This activity has five workscopes to develop workshops and provide training and technical assistance through NEA-related and other organizations to teachers throughout the Region.

- The Potpourri '90 Workshop showcased four AEL School Excellence Workshops (SEWs); and, as a joint study group conference, included three forums and five workshops that showcased the findings and products of 17 (nine CI and eight School Governance and Administration [SGA]) study groups. One hundred and two participants attended the concurrent sessions and State Planning Meetings that were held October 26-28 in Nashville, Tennessee. "Community Support Through Public Relations," "Focusing on Motivation: The Need to Succeed," "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help Through Instruction and Policy," and "Teacher as Decision-maker: Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School" were the SEWs for which one and a half-hour awareness sessions were conducted, while study group sessions included school-based decisionmaking, parent involvement, effective questioning, student success, school organizational issues, and mentoring. In State Planning Meetings that concluded the event, the following training priorities were selected by educators representing each state: Kentucky--"Focusing on Motivation," Tennessee--"Community Support," Virginia--"Community Support," and West Virginia--"TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets."

- The second West Virginia Institute for School Success included awareness session replications of six AEL School Excellence Workshops, originally the topics of one and a half-day training-for-trainers sessions conducted for the first Institute in June 1990. The second Institute, held in Huntington on September 27-29, featured presenters trained by AEL staff or consultants in the first Institute and provided AEL-developed training materials to the 310 participants.

- CI staff conducted a five-hour "Targets for Trainers" workshop in October in Roanoke, Virginia, for 11 educators who were presenters in the November Virginia Education Association Instruction Conference held in Roanoke. "Presenting Effective Workshops" was presented by CI staff for 35 participants in a concurrent session at the November conference. CI staff copresented a session on university/school collaboration with a Marshall University professor at the West Virginia Humanities Council Conference held

October 18-19 in Charleston, West Virginia. CI staff conducted a two-hour skill session on Parent/Community Involvement and School Renewal at the National Education Association's National Center for Innovation in Education Symposium held in Colorado Springs, Colorado, November 7-12. AEL awareness materials were distributed to educators from AEL's Region and national association supporters of professional development for educators in the Region who attended the conference. CI staff prepared and distributed 1,386 packets of information on AEL/CI programs and services at 14 events during the quarter.

- The Project TEACH (Teach Everyone About Computers Here) Lesson Planning Committee conducted two orientations during September and October for 50 volunteers who then presented three-hour lessons for elementary students in Kanawha County (West Virginia), releasing their teachers to attend computer inservice education sessions.

Activity 3: Establishing/Supporting Study Groups

This activity has five workscopes to establish study groups and assist in planning, development, and dissemination of their final products.

- Two CI study group products were completed during the fourth quarter. Teaching Grade Combination Classes: Real Problems and Promising Practices, based on a VEA-AEL cosponsored survey of effective practices and recommended policies, and the TEA-AEL Site-Based Decisionmaking Resource Packets, five packets on preparing to undertake, developing skills for, and gaining support for this approach were typeset, and camera-ready copies of the products and announcement flyers were provided to cosponsoring associations and AEL's Resource Center.

Activity 4: Manage Program Administrative Functions and Participate in Intra-Lab Cooperatives

This activity has two workscopes to coordinate the actions of Program Advisory Committee members and collaborate with other AEL programs and centers.

- All CI members participated in the September 30 Program Advisory Committee meeting at the fourth quarter AEL Board meeting held in Roanoke, Virginia, in conjunction with the Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program's "Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools: The Dollar Dilemma" conference. PAC members also served as facilitators of study group concurrent sessions and State Planning Meetings as part of the Potpourri '90 Workshop held October 26-28 in Nashville, Tennessee.

- CI staff collaborated with SGA staff in planning, presenting, evaluating, and cosponsoring Potpourri '90. Other examples of cross-program cooperation include: participation in all AEL Management Team meetings, provision of evaluation data for all training events conducted by staff or replications provided by AEL-trained trainers, session facilitation for the RSS program's conference on rural school finance, and materials provision.

Task 2: School Governance and Administration Program

Activity 1: Providing R & D-based Information to School Administrators and School Boards

This activity includes the following: preparing "SGA Exchange," contributing to association newsletters, using the toll-free telephone line and the Resource Center, and maintaining channels of communication.

- School Governance and Administration (SGA) staff, in collaboration with the Tennessee Association for School Supervision and Administration (TASSA) AEL Board representative, coordinated the development of a four-page insert on educational reform for The Link. SGA sent the Kentucky Leadership in Educational Administration Development (LEAD) project camera-ready copies of the "SGA Exchange" and the Classroom Instruction (CI) program's "Focus on Instruction" for replication in its newsletter, which is sent to approximately 2,000 Kentucky administrators.
- SGA provided five issues of AEL's "R & D Notes" (Communication Service Assistance Program articles), as well as "ERIC Digests," to more than 30 educator groups in the Region.
- SGA staff received 265 incoming calls during this quarter from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia; 140 calls on the toll-free line were received from within the state. Staff made approximately 320 calls to educators in the Region.
- Either SGA staff or the Resource Center received 250 requests for free materials and 52 information requests from administrators and school board members.
- PCRs and other documentation indicated that 6,216 contacts occurred with educators in the Region this quarter.
- Three issues of "LEAD News in the Region" memos were shared with LEAD directors, SGA Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members, AEL administrators, and OERI project monitors.
- SGA prepared special information packets on selected topics, such as restructuring, for the SGA PAC meeting in Roanoke, Virginia, on October 1.
- SGA staff served as facilitators for the Select Seminar on Restructuring at Canaan Valley in Davis, West Virginia, on November 16-18. Fifty-five persons attended the seminar, which was sponsored by the West Virginia Legislature.
- SGA staff coordinated a second regional LEAD meeting on September 15 in Richmond, Virginia.

Activity 2: Establishing and Operating State Study Groups

This activity includes initial establishment and subsequent operation of state study groups and the dissemination of study group products.

- Kentucky Association of School Administrators (KASA)-AEL study group on effective questioning
  - The KASA-AEL study group on effective questioning continued this quarter revising the Questioning and Understanding to Improve Learning and Thinking (QUILT) materials. Pilot testing of QUILT materials was begun in selected schools in West Virginia and Kentucky.
- TASSA-AEL study group on priorities and needs of members of an umbrella association for school administrators
  - The results of data analysis for the TASSA study group have been interpreted and a summary of the findings has been written.
- Virginia Center for Educational Leadership (VCEL)-AEL study group on leadership
  - The final copy for the facilitator's guide has been completed, as well as reproduction of the four videotapes for the VCEL-AEL study group on leadership.
- West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA)-AEL study group on parent involvement
  - The WVASA-AEL study group on parent involvement completed its final report of the seminar on "School Advisory Councils" and the seminar on "Rationale for Parent Involvement." Two training-for-trainers events were held in collaboration with the WVASA study group on August 6 in Charleston and on October 30 in South Charleston, West Virginia. Approximately 30 West Virginia educators attended the August training; 48 attended the October training. Education consultant Helen Saunders and Roger Daniels and Charlotte Hutchens, study group members, served as trainers. Plans for dissemination were developed, including training through the local chapter of Phi Delta Kappa.

Activity 3: Providing Technical Assistance to School Administrators Through In-State Workshops, Conferences, and to the School Excellence Network

This activity includes the following: planning and conducting the Potpourri Workshop and followup training, presenting awareness sessions, developing and revising one School Excellence Workshop, conducting training-for-trainers workshops, and providing technical assistance to the School Excellence Network.

- The SGA and CI programs collaborated in hosting the 1990 Potpourri Workshop and study group conference, "Linking Research with Practice," in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 26-28. Four AEL School Excellence Workshops were showcased: "Community Support Through Public Relations," "Focusing on Motivation: The Need to Succeed," "Marginal Learners: Ways to Help Through Policy and Instruction," and "Teacher as Decisionmaker: Empowerment in the Classroom and in the School," as well as five study group workshops and three forums. More than 100 educators attended the Potpourri Workshop and study group conference. Topics included effective questioning, parent involvement, effective leadership, etc. Sample comments about the Potpourri included: "I really liked the information plus the interaction with peers from neighboring states." "I really liked the materials provided; good information; chance to sample several topics." "I really liked the whole program. It was the first experience for me with AEL, and I was very impressed. Thanks!"

Activity 4: Managing, Planning, and Collaborating with Other Lab Programs

This activity includes conducting SGA PAC meetings; managing the program's administration, planning, evaluating, and budgeting; and cooperating/collaborating with other AEL programs.

- The fourth AEL Board meeting of FY 90 was held on September 30-October 1 in Roanoke, Virginia. SGA staff continued their participation in the AEL Management Team and Editorial Board activities this quarter. SGA staff continued to meet regularly with the internal evaluator on the data collection instruments, Quad Calls, review of study group products, and other evaluation matters related to the program. SGA collaborated with CI on the Potpourri Workshop and with the Policy and Planning Center on the select seminar for school board members on restructuring schools.

Task 3: Policy and Planning Center

Activity 1: Maintaining a Forum for CSSOs

Center-sponsored forums allow for small-group, one-on-one discussion of issues. Forums typically, but not always, occur in conjunction with quarterly meetings of the Center Advisory Committee.

- At the fourth-quarter meeting of the Council on Policy and Planning, members used the time allocated to discuss the implementation of the newest reforms underway in Kentucky and West Virginia, as well as those anticipated in Tennessee. The discussion focused on the need to better understand the consequences of implementing certain policy decisions. Advisory committee members asked Center staff to identify one or more persons familiar with systemic change who could discuss the issue with the group during the next meeting. Staff agreed to put together a team of people from the list generated at the meeting or others if they seem appropriate. The list includes Gene Hall, Michael Kirst, Susan Loucks-Horsley, Jane David, Michael Cohen, or Susan Furhman.

- Council members have been working on the development of an issue matrix. The purpose of the matrix is to aid in planning program work. It asks the status of a number of topics (student assessment, site-based decisionmaking, local board training), using a three-point scale. Center staff had assigned ratings to each of the items for three of the states. Council members agreed to (1) review staffs' ratings for their states, (2) correct ratings where appropriate, (3) add and rate any missing topics that are timely for the state, and (4) return the corrected matrix to Center staff.

- Quad Calls are an evaluation strategy used by AEL to obtain client feedback about program services. Quad Calls were made during the fourth quarter to several sets of Center clients, including advisory committee members. Center Advisory Committee meetings include discussion of (a) timely issues in the states, sometimes with an outside expert, and (b) tasks associated with the operation of the Center. Committee members were asked to identify what one or two things they value most about the meetings. Answers included "opportunity for dialogue and discussion," "networking," "opportunity to sit with other policymakers and share current issues," and "the confidence in the information and the straightforwardness of the information."

- We received word this quarter that the Star Schools grant application developed by three AEL states, the University of Tennessee, and AEL was not funded.

Activity 2: Sponsoring Symposium of State Government Decisionmakers

Symposia are a second convening strategy used by the Center. The annual event is regional in nature and designed to explore an emerging issue in the Region.

- During the fourth quarter, Center staff completed the proceedings from the May 15 symposium. Titled Proceedings: Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, Special Policymaker Briefing, the document has been shared with participants at the event and delivered to OERI.

- Participants' reactions to the meeting were obtained through Quad Calls this quarter. When asked what two or three aspects of the meeting most stand out in their minds, the respondents answered "very thorough," "professional and efficient," "timely information," and "very impressive." Their comments indicate that information learned at the event was seen as useful by the participants: "Very helpful in trying to sift through what Tennessee will be dealing with," "financial information on disparity was very useful in dealing with the situation in Virginia," and "information was used in reviewing and analyzing the reform effort set forth by the West Virginia special session."

Activity 3: Providing Policy Trend and Synthesis Services

The Center's series of issue papers are the primary strategy for providing synthesis services.

- The five issue papers published by the Center over the past few months have been enthusiastically received by the Region. The issue paper on school finance by Kern Alexander was featured as the lead story of the August 1990 issue of R & D Preview. The advisory committee members in Kentucky requested 75 copies of the four issue papers, published during the third quarter for distribution to key Kentucky decisionmakers. The West Virginia Department of Education requested 30 copies of the Kern Alexander paper. Tennessee's House Education chairman asked that copies of four of the papers be sent to every member of the Education Oversight Committee. The National Education Service requested permission to reprint and include in its offerings the issue paper by Gary Badarak titled Recapturing the Policymaking Function of State Boards of Education. The Center will receive multiple copies of the reprint for distribution in the Region.

- Center staff completed work on three final issue papers. These include:

- Computers and Improving Basic Skills by Charles Kinzer and Elizabeth Baker, a joint publication of AEL's Policy and Planning Center and the Learning Technology Center at Vanderbilt University;
- Delegating Authority, Demanding Accountability by Patricia Ceperley, the Center's staff associate; and
- The Change Process and Site-Based Decisionmaking by Gene Hall and Gary Galluzzo of the University of Northern Colorado.

- At its second-quarter meeting, the Council on Policy and Planning directed Center staff to develop issue packets instead of four issue papers for FY 90, given the length of time that experience has proved as necessary for production of a quality product. Subsequent to that directive, Council members agreed that one issue paper and three packets would be developed. The Gene Hall and Gary Galluzzo paper named above is the fourth product called for in this year's work. Three packets were produced by Center staff this quarter on the topics of year-round schools, site-based decisionmaking, and ungraded primary.

Activity 4: Maintaining Communications with Region's Policymakers

Mailings and face-to-face communications are used to maintain contacts with policymakers in the four states.

- The fourth issue of "Policy Briefs" discussed the national education goals and the importance of state leadership in focusing the conversation of reform.
- Center staff members met with the working group developing a distance education plan for West Virginia.
- The Center director and AEL's evaluation specialist consulted with a group of West Virginia education officials charged with designing an evaluation plan for the state's $7 million Computers for Basic Skills initiative.

Activity 5: Managing the Policy and Planning Center

Several tasks are associated with managing the operations of the Center, including working with other AEL programs to ensure state policy perspectives in Labwide efforts.

- The Center was one of four cosponsors of the October 2 school finance conference of the Rural, Small Schools program. The Center secured policymaker participation in the meeting, including arranging for some to serve as panelist respondents.

- The Center director spent quite a bit of time planning the October 31-November 1 Regional Laboratory Symposium on Kentucky Education Reform, a Task 5 activity. The first morning session was devoted to various presentations on the design and passage of the act. The Center director identified the key people to be presenters and arranged for their participation.

- The Center's staff associate served as a small group facilitator at the November 16-18 Select Seminar for School Board Governance, a collaborative activity of the School Governance and Administration program and the West Virginia School Boards Association for the West Virginia Legislature.

Task 4: Professional Preparation and Research Program

The Professional Preparation and Research (PP&R) program conducts three activities, responsive to Task 4, creating R & D-based programs for school improvement.

Activity 1: Collaborating with State ACTEs

During this quarter, the program continued to assist state Associations of Colleges for Teacher Education (ACTEs) to plan conferences focused on R & D, published and distributed state ACTE newsletters as wraparounds on The Link, and sponsored the Fourth Annual PP&R Working Conference.

- The PP&R program director participated in two state ACTE meetings held during this quarter: the VACTE meeting held in Virginia Beach on September 16-18 and the WVACTE meeting held at North Bend State Park on October 28-30. During each of these meetings, presentations were made on the PP&R program and discussions were held with association leaders about the ongoing collaboration between the state ACTE and PP&R. PP&R provided input for planning these and other state ACTE meetings through the state ACTE representatives who advise the program.

- Since 1986, PP&R has published and distributed the newsletters for KACTE, VACTE, and WVACTE as "wraparounds" on copies of AEL's quarterly newsletter, The Link, that are distributed to these associations' members. During FY 90, the program experienced some difficulties in obtaining copy for these newsletters. In the fourth quarter, new editorial assignments were made in all states.

- Twelve participants--state ACTE officers, PP&R Advisory Committee members, and program staff--attended the Fourth Annual PP&R Working Conference, a one-day, fly-in meeting on November 2 at the Pittsburgh Airport Hotel. Staff reviewed the outcomes of state ACTE/PP&R collaboration to date, insights gained from experiments undertaken, and new ideas to be tested in 1991's work plan. Also, state ACTE representatives met in state groups to lay out plans to link their association activities to AEL. Participants agreed to name five-member committees to work on an ongoing basis with AEL, providing year-to-year continuity and keeping the lines of communication open. In addition, they identified ways to recognize the efforts of faculty members and others who serve their state ACTEs.

- As noted last quarter, the VACTE study group submitted its final report to PP&R in August. Each of the three other original state ACTE study groups submitted final reports late this quarter. One of these, the KACTE/PP&R study group, produced a monograph titled Reconsidering the Role of Field and Clinical Experience in the Professional Education of Teachers: A Sourcebook.

Activity 2: Operating the AEL Minigrant Program

Because FY 90 is the final year of the contract that supports PP&R's work, all products of the program had to be completed before the end of this quarter. Therefore, the only round of the Minigrant program competition held this year was concluded in March so that grantees could complete their work and submit their final reports before November 30. The staff's major effort this quarter has been editing and publishing Minigrant final reports.

- Nine final reports of AEL Minigrant projects were edited for publication during the quarter. Citations for these reports follow:

  - Minigrant Report No. 38--The Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of a Mentoring Program for Physical Education Teachers, by William Meadors;

  - Minigrant Report No. 39--The Value of Predictable Books for Adult Beginning Readers, by Nancy R. Carwile;

  - Minigrant Report No. 40--Using the Language Experience Approach to Promote Reading and Language Skills for Underachieving Beginning Readers in Rural Schools, by Elinor Ross and Margaret Phelps;

  - Minigrant Report No. 41--A Study of Six High Schools in Appalachia, by Kenneth J. Henry;

  - Minigrant Report No. 42--The Foxfire Approach to Instruction: Documentation Through Alternative Forms of Assessment, by Sharon Teets;

  - Minigrant Report No. 43--The Impact of Internship Training on Resource Teachers and Teacher Educators, by Ron Hickey, Cliff McMahon, Linda Olasov, Lynne Smith, and Stephen Walker;

  - Minigrant Report No. 44--Multicultural Education for Preservice Teachers, by Daisy F. Reed;

  - Minigrant Report No. 45--Year Two Planning and Evaluation of a Field-Based Principal Preparation Program, by Wayne Worner; and

  - Minigrant Report No. 46: An Investigation of Attributions of Helpful by Parents of Developmentally Delayed Infants and Their Helping Constellations, by Kristine Derer.

- Because this fourth-quarter FY 90 report had to be written before the quarter's end, final reports had not yet been received when copy for the report was required. We anticipate receiving final reports from the following grantees:

  - Minigrant Report No. 47--Teacher Perceptions of Current Teacher Evaluation Practices, by Rita T. Noel;
  - Minigrant Report No. 48--The Impact of Conflict Resolution Curriculum on Elementary School Students' Perception of Conflict and Problem Solving, by Jeffrey Messing;
  - Minigrant Report No. 49--Development and Evaluation of Prototype Cadet Teacher Programs, by Russell French;
  - Minigrant Report No. 50--Positive Labeling and the Sibling Relationship in Families with Gifted Children, by Diane Tuttle;
  - Minigrant Report No. 51--The Effects of an Inservice Education Program on Teacher Behaviors in Basic Writing Classes at the Secondary Level, by Mark Hogan;
  - Minigrant Report No. 52--Motivators and Deterrants Which Impact Black Americans Entering Teacher Education, by Ronald Butterfield;
  - Minigrant Report No. 53--Non-Monetary Compensation Survey, by Mark Wasicsko;
  - Minigrant Report No. 54--The Effect of Computer-Based Writing Instruction on the Performance and Attitudes of Junior and Senior High School Students, by W. Michael Reed; and
  - Minigrant Report No. 55--Training Required by Clinical Faculty Members and Teacher Mentors: A Descriptive Study, by John Dickens and Henry Bowers.

  Each report will be edited and published as soon as it is made available to the PP&R staff.

Activity 3: Directing Communications and Project Management

Staff continued to carry out direct communications, provide support for PP&R Advisory Committee work, coordinate PP&R work, and collaborate with other AEL projects. Some of the key actions carried out this quarter are described below.

- The final issue of "PP&R Connection," the program's quarterly newsletter, was written and published. As in previous quarters, the "PP&R Connection" was provided as an insert in copies of AEL's newsletter, The Link, that were distributed to faculty at approximately 100 higher education institutions in the Region.

- The PP&R "contacts" who distribute PP&R correspondence at their higher education institutions continued to receive copies of "R & D Notes" monthly throughout the quarter.

- Staff provided planning and logistical support for two meetings this quarter: the fourth-quarter PP&R Advisory Committee meeting held in Roanoke on September 30 and the Fourth Annual PP&R Working Conference held at the Pittsburgh Airport Hotel on November 2.

- PP&R staff maintained appropriate communications with state ACTE officials, Minigrant recipients, and other education personnel in the Region during the fourth quarter, and updates of PP&R's work were regularly presented at Management Team meetings.

Task 4: School Services Center

Activity 1: Delivering Services to the Region's Educators

Services provided under this activity included the AEL Resource Center, consultation on general requests, the AEL Network of Schools, Lab overview presentations, and AEL's newsletter, The Link.

- During this quarter, the AEL Resource Center handled 437 requests for materials and disseminated 2,859 documents. Staff processed 148 information search requests. Evaluation forms returned by 170 Resource Center clients indicated continuing satisfaction with Resource Center services. Client requests for general Laboratory services, excluding those of the Resource Center, totaled approximately 30. The Resource Center and AEL Business Office worked together to acquire the Statistical Package for Social Sciences-Personal Computer (SPSS-PC) software and documentation needed to support the Lab staff development discussed below. Resource Center staff planned and implemented a professional development day with Richard Brickley and his staff at Research and Information Services for Education in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania.

- The AEL Network of Schools expanded by five new members during the quarter. Communications among members concerned cooperative learning and computer-assisted instruction, primarily.

- Staff participated in several overview presentations about the Laboratory's work, including one for seven U. S. Information Agency visitors from Jordan.

- During the fourth quarter, 127 names were added to the computerized Link mailing list, bringing the total to 7,956. Production of The Link was carried out on schedule, and staff prepared contract specifications for use by the Government Printing Office in securing bids for the production of The Link in future years.

Activity 2: Producing and Providing R & D Products

R & D products provided under this activity were an annual update on multistate study results, the AEL Occasional Paper Series, and the AEL staff development program.

- The project completed and submitted to OERI an update on two multistate studies: A Survey of Early Childhood Education and Care in the AEL Member States by Carol Perroncel and Adolescent Substance Abuse Programs in AEL's Region by Jack Clohan, Jr., and Roger Tittle. These two studies will be published as AEL occasional papers for FY 90. Also, at the suggestion of the project advisory committee, SSC staff negotiated with ERIC/CRESS to coproduce as an ERIC monograph and AEL occasional paper a treatise on school reorganization and consolidation by E. Robert Stephens. However, that paper will not be published in FY 90.

- Twenty AEL staff attended a professional development session on the operation and application of the SPSS-PC software. Consultant John Williams, coordinator of the statistics lab at Virginia Tech, presented the two-day session. The SPSS-PC package was installed subsequently on the computers used by AEL research staff. Other statistical packages such as Statpac Gold and Number Cruncher will continue to be available, of course.

Activity 3: Coordinating Laboratory Evaluation and Preparation of Required Reports to OERI

Under this activity, AEL conducted the internal evaluation of the Regional Educational Laboratory program and coordinated the work of an external evaluator. Also under this activity was coordination of ERIC submissions and of all required performance reports for OERI.

- SSC assisted staff in preparing and submitting draft and final copy of the final report per the "technical direction" memo from Barbara Lieb-Brilhart dated April 6, 1990.

- Staff visited with external evaluators at Western Michigan University to discuss the preliminary findings of studies included in the FY 90 external evaluation report. Staff also worked with Laboratory programs to ensure that FY 90 evaluation results were ready to include with the final report.

- Staff produced and delivered to OERI on schedule the third quarter report for FY 90.

- Five ERIC submissions during this quarter include the following:

  - Tips for Teaching Marginal Learners, (study group product), KEA/AEL;

  - Local Control of Schools: Is Local Governance a Viable Option? (policy issue paper), Charles F. Faber;

  - Choice in American Education (policy issue paper), John F. Witte;

  - Restructuring America's Schools (policy issue paper), Joseph Murphy; and

  - Recapturing the Policymaking Function of State Boards of Education (policy issue paper), Gary W. Badarak.

Activity 4: Managing the School Services Center

Under this activity, staff carried out the planning, implementation, collaboration, and evaluation tasks necessary to operate the School Services Center.

- During the quarter, SSC director John Sanders met several times with the AEL Management Team. Sanders also met with evaluator Merrill Meehan to complete the report of the FY 90 evaluation of SSC activities.

- The SSC Advisory Committee held its fourth FY 90 meeting on October 1, 1990, in Roanoke, Virginia.

- AEL collaborated with Roanoke City Public Schools and the Center for Cognitive Teaching at Radford University to sponsor "Making Connections II" on November 7-9 in Roanoke, Virginia. The conference brought 100 practitioners together to discuss the work of four outstanding scholars in classroom instruction: Joseph Campione, Nancy Karweit, Matthew Lipman, and Annemarie Palincsar.

Task 5: Collaboration

Activity 1: OERI/REL Collaboration

This activity provided OERI the opportunity to convene Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) representatives to collaborate on areas of common interest.

- There were no OERI-initiated collaborative meetings this past quarter.

Activity 2: REL Networking

This activity encouraged and facilitated communications between and among the REL contractors. Providing and maintaining communication channels among the contractors and OERI is regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition for collaboration to occur.

- During the past quarter, staff continued to monitor REL and OERI messages on the GTE Network.
- Staff engaged in ongoing communications with the Lab/Center network and with OERI officials using regular and electronic mail, as well as telephone and face-to-face communications, as needed.
- AEL distributed five issues of CSAP blurbs, "R & D Notes," during the past quarter. Total distribution of the five issues was 7,133. During the quarter, AEL submitted to CSAP four documents:
  - Choice in American Education by John Witte, 1990;
  - Local Control of Schools: Is Local Governance a Viable Option? by Charles Faber, 1990;
  - Restructuring America's Schools by Joseph Murphy, 1990; and
  - Handbook for Writing School Newsletters by Craig Howley, 1987.

Activity 3: Thematic Collaboration

This activity empowered the Laboratories to initiate and maintain ad hoc collaborative groups that address issues of common concern. A collaborative group is defined as at least three participating organizations, two of which are OERI-supported.

- AEL took the lead in initiating a symposium for OERI and REL representatives on the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990. Three representatives from OERI and 23 representatives from the

Labs participated in the two-day meeting. The first day was devoted to explanations of the development and implementation of the act. Presenters included the Kentucky Chief State School Officer and two deputies, the state secretary of education and humanities, two of the three lawmakers who sponsored the legislation, the director of and four task force leaders from the Council on School Performance, officials of the major education associations in the Commonwealth, and representative teachers, principals, supervisors, superintendents, and school board members. U. S. Under Secretary of Education Ted Sanders provided the keynote presentation at dinner to conclude the first day. The second day was devoted to small group discussions among Labs and OERI staff concerning (1) R & D resources that could be helpful to Kentucky in addressing the issues, problems, and technical assistance needs emerging from the implementation of the reform act; (2) additional problems, issues, or technical assistance needs that seem likely to emerge in the reform effort; and (3) ways the network of Labs can support each other in efforts to be responsive to states undergoing fundamental change. Consultants from the University of Kentucky agreed to prepare symposium proceedings that will include an evaluation of the event.

- Jane Hange provided updates to Research for Better Schools about AEL's involvement in the collaborative on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). A memo updating the 200-plus practitioners in AEL's HOTS network with information about new research and teaching resources was distributed.

- Sandra Orletsky participated in a meeting of the collaborative working on school restructuring. That group is preparing a workshop on the topic to be presented at the 1991 American Association of School Administrators conference. The workshop will build on the group's symposium on restructuring that was presented at the 1990 American Educational Research Association conference.

Task 5: Rural, Small Schools Program

The Rural, Small Schools (RSS) program operated under one regular contract during the first month and under a continuation contract for the final two months of this quarter. Many activities overlapped, but some activities are unique to one contract or the other. This report is organized by similar work activities with the contractual activities and workscopes referenced. The first contract was the third based on the rural initiative and is called Phase III.

Establish or Strengthen Working Relationships with Rural Co-Partners and Disseminate Activities
(Activity 1, Phase III; Tasks 1 and 5, Continuation)

Three distinct types of activities were involved in working with co-partners. They included the following:

- Staff made a total of seven presentations at four regional and national conferences and meetings. Organizations and conferences involved the National Rural Education Association, the New Jersey Rural Schools Conference (sponsored by Research for Better Schools), the Woodlands Mountain Institute (West Virginia), and the National Rural Task Force Meeting. Staff also conducted a trainer-for-trainers workshop on ERIC in local schools for staff from five other Regional Laboratories.

- During this quarter, the RSS program director, Todd Strohmenger, arranged the itinerary for five educators from Jordan on an exchange program sponsored by the Institute of International Education. Strohmenger and Berma Lanham hosted the visitors on a tour of the Southside Virginia Library Network.

- Staff solicited and edited eight articles that will comprise a special issue of the Journal of Rural and Small Schools devoted to rural education and economics. The issue will include an article and introduction by RSS staff. Other contributors include staff of another Regional Laboratory and a former ERIC director.

Continue Development of School-Community Development Process
(Activity 2, Phase III; Task 2, Continuation)

The Phase III contract called for replication of the School-Community Improvement Process by select higher education institutions. In addition, RSS staff was to provide technical assistance to the original test sites that wanted to continue using the process by having the steering committee start a new cycle. The following information highlights that work:

- In this quarter, Pam Coe attended a meeting of Charlotte's Web, the second steering committee of Charlotte County Schools in Virginia. The group is planning a countywide database of information. The superintendent of Charlotte County Schools indicated that the original steering committee of the test site is still actively pursuing the plans for a new middle school, the project identified during the test of the model and process in that school division. A list of databases available from various sources was prepared and mailed to Charlotte's Web for consideration as development continues of a countywide database for school and community use.

Special Project in Library Networking
(Activity 2, Phase III; Task 3 and 5, Continuation)

Work with the library network was very successful. The following information highlights that work:

- Staff developed a prototype of a videotape showcasing ERIC on CD-ROM for use in workshops and presentations regarding the library network. The videotape was shown at four presentations and an ERIC Directors Meeting in this last quarter. Comments by participants in these meetings were very positive and provided the basis for an improved version. A presentation regarding the library network was made to the Select Oversight Committee on Education for Tennessee on October 31, 1990, in which the videotape was an integral part. Staff recorded additional videotape and developed an improved version of the videotape of ERIC on CD-ROM. Portions of the videotape were used to develop a prototype about online access of college library catalogs by local schools. This study added to the rural databases and provided an opportunity to see if such studies would yield useful, new knowledge about rural education. The successful study provides a pattern for further studies in the other states of the Region.

A Special Project to Monitor the Initial Impact of the Kentucky Reform Movement on Rural Schools
(Activity 2, Phase III; Task 3, Continuation)

This project was designed to document the initial reactions to the massive Kentucky education reform legislation. The impact of this reform on the rural schools of Kentucky is projected to be impressive and in need of this type of documentation.

- Pam Coe and Patricia Kannapel conducted a special project to monitor the initial impact and reaction to the massive Kentucky school reform legislation on six school rural school districts in that state. A special report was prepared to explicate the findings of the study.

A Special Project to Conduct a Conference on Rural School Finance (Activity 2, Phase III; Task 3, Continuation)

Rural school finance has been identified as a major concern of educators in the AEL Region. This conference was designed to assist policymakers and educators understand and cope with this problem.

- A conference titled "Fiscal Policies for Rural Schools: The Dollar Dilemma" was held on October 2, 1990, at Roanoke, Virginia. Presenters included nine recognized experts in the field of school finance. The conference was cosponsored by Virginia Tech, Radford University, AEL's Policy and Planning Center, and the RSS program. Mary Hughes, RSS staff member, coordinated the conference for AEL. The conference was attended by 160 educators from 16 states. Participants included staff from three other Regional Laboratories, two Chief State School Officers, college professors, legislators, board members, parents, teachers, members of the AEL Board of Directors, and two individuals from OERI. Evaluation of the conference by participants was extremely positive. The conference was videotaped by staff from Radford University, and edited videotapes of the presentations were developed. RSS will cosponsor a special issue of the Journal of School Finance with the publishers of the journal.

Dissemination of Information About Rural Education (Activity 3, Phase III; Tasks 5 and 6, Continuation)

These activities have been ongoing since the initial rural initiative contract. The following are the highlights of that work:

- An additional edition of the "Rural School Companion" was prepared this quarter as directed in the continuing contract. Also, requests for information about consolidation were filled by collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, AEL's Policy and Planning Center, and the Resource Center. A packet of materials was assembled and provided to clients upon request. All materials development by RSS has been submitted to the ERIC system.

Identify, Gather, and Generate Information About Rural Education and the Region (Activity 3, Phase III; Task 4, Continuation)

This activity expanded the rural database and created new information for dissemination. The following are highlights of this activity:

- The electronic files of information about rural education in the Region were maintained and expanded. Documents were added to the paper files, and the accession bibliography on rural education now contains more than 600 citations.

- Mary Hughes developed a database of the 151 high schools in West Virginia and ranked them to identify the highest ten percent and the lowest ten percent using three performance measures: percentage dropouts, percentage attendance rate, and eight state achievement test measures. She found that the highest ranking schools had an average dropout rate one-fifth the lowest ranking schools; the highest ranking schools had two-thirds the number of students receiving free or reduced-price meals; four percent more staff with a masters + 15 hours; and almost two-thirds higher achievement score levels than the lowest ranking schools. Sixty percent of the highest ranking schools had an enrollment of fewer than 300 students, and 66 percent of the lowest ranked schools had an enrollment greater than 300 students.

SECTION C: SUMMARY OF AEL'S FY 90 SELF-ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this section is to provide a summary of AEL's FY 90 self-assessment, based on internal evaluation activities and the external evaluator's report. The external evaluation was completed by staff at The Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University. This summary of AEL's self-assessment is presented in terms of the major conclusions drawn from the FY 90 internal and external evaluations. Conclusions are not presented in rank order--they are equally important.

Conclusion #1: AEL had an Impact in its Region in 1990

We conclude that AEL made an impact on education in its Region in 1990. The evidence from AEL's documentation and evaluation systems leads us to this conclusion. Let's look at some of the reasons that support our claim of having made an impact in 1990.

First, AEL's clients were very aware of the Lab, its staff, and its services. In FY 90, AEL documented 44,751 contacts with clients in the field. The vast majority of contacts were in the AEL Region. AEL staff received and processed 6,853 WATS line calls for technical assistance in FY 90. AEL's Resource Center received 1,403 requests for materials in FY 90 and, as a result, disseminated a total of 5,667 documents. At various events in the field, AEL staff distributed 9,586 information-type packets. In FY 90, AEL programs disseminated to their clients 15,093 sets of one-page descriptions of recent research from across the nation.

Second, AEL's clients were very aware of the Lab's products and projects. In FY 90, a total of 31,042 copies of The Link, the Lab's quarterly publication, were mailed to AEL clients. Readers of The Link shared their copy with an average of 10 others in FY 90. Further, each issue of The Link contained audience-specific inserts and/or wraparounds of copy. Four new teacher-, administrator-, and teacher educator-AEL study group products were added to the list of those produced in prior years and were distributed on a cost-recovery basis. Nearly 100 institutions of higher education received regular communications about research products in general and AEL Minigrants in particular. Forty school districts and schools were enrolled in the AEL Network of Schools and received information packages and networking memos and participated in interactive conference calls on selected topics of interest.

Third, AEL clients were very satisfied with the Lab's services and products in FY 90. The summary of 509 clients' evaluations on eight items assessing AEL provision of services in field activities were very high. On the service assessment instrument's rating scale of 0 (low) to 50 (high), seven of the eight items (e.g., timeliness, responsiveness, competency, credibility, etc.) were rated above 43. Accessibleness (the location of the event) was the single item rated less than 40 and it was 37.22. The readership survey of The Link revealed that 82 percent of the respondents stated it provided information or services not available elsewhere and that the average reader shared it with 15 other persons. Client satisfaction with the "Focus on Instruction" insert to The Link was rated above five on the 0 (low) to 6 (high) scale for the four items assessing readability, usefulness of content, timeliness of content, and relevance. On the 0 (low) to 50 (high) scale of satisfaction for four items, the Resource Center materials respondents rated accessibility = 49.00, responsiveness = 49.00, credibility = 46.41, and usefulness = 43.56.

Fourth, there is evidence that AEL had a positive impact on educators' practices and policies in the Region in FY 90. For example, the workshop trainers feedback form was completed and returned by 228 educators in the Region out of a total of 440 who were trained to train others. These 228 trainers reported that they conducted a total of 56 replication workshops in the Region with a total of 1,456 participants. Nine Minigrants were awarded to university researchers in FY 90 to conduct and report on research completed in the AEL Region. Finally, AEL staff conducted a total of 100 evaluation telephone interviews for activities completed in FY 90. From these focused client interviews, numerous examples of how AEL products and services impacted clients' thinking, practices, and/or policies were noted. A few examples, gleaned from the telephone interviews, illustrate the point. One principal in Virginia said, "I went into the study group with selfish motives, but I received personal and professional growth toward understanding my leadership style." The editor for Tennessee Teacher said, regarding information received from AEL, she "weaves the information into articles for the journal." The director for the Family Development Center in Richmond, Virginia, said she currently is using materials from an AEL workshop in a satellite program broadcast throughout Essex County. The Tennessee House Education Committee chairperson said that during the last advisory committee meeting the discussion focused on library "hook-up" programs and that "I brought this information back to Tennessee and a program will be implemented." A principal in Tennessee said the information she received from AEL on cooperative learning and the videocassette training series were helpful in getting a cooperative learning project implemented at her school.

Conclusion #2: AEL's Impact on School Improvement is Enduring

We conclude that AEL's impact on school improvement efforts is enduring. The results of the intensive case study of Warren County Schools in Kentucky lead to this conclusion. The case study was completed entirely by AEL's external evaluators at Western Kentucky University. The case study appeared in FY '90 Report: External Evaluation of the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, a separately bound report. The results of their case study of Warren County Schools demonstrate the enduring aspects of AEL products and services targeted toward school improvement.

Following are FY 90 conclusions taken from the case study of Warren County Schools completed by Western Michigan University authors.

1. Action plans developed in [AEL] workshops still clearly are operational in Warren County School buildings. A variety of at-risk programs in the school[s] is probably the most visible evidence. However, test analysis being done by some school principals and their teachers were an outgrowth of an AEL workshop; an assertive discipline plan being used by a teacher was another; observation of public relations efforts by the central administration are yet further evidence of workshop impact.

2. Warren County is using Beginning Principal materials as orientation for all new principals.

3. The school district used the 1986 AEL PRO-S/E report [Profile of School Excellence assessment package] as a basis for its five year strategic plan, thought to be a model by other school districts.

4. The results of a study group review of research on effective elementary counseling led to a widely shared monograph that has guided a new guidance program in an elementary school.

5. The Link and R & D Notes are regularly scanned by the school district staff for information pertinent to pressing challenges. When useful information is found, it is requested and then shared with interested staff. (pp. 87-88)

Conclusion #3: AEL Staff Performed Very Well in a Difficult Year

We conclude that AEL staff performed well in an extremely difficult year. For a variety of reasons, this year was especially trying to AEL's professional and support staff; yet, overall, staff completed their tasks, delivered their services, and developed their products.

Several contextual factors in the Region transpired in 1990 that impacted the performance of AEL staff. First, the revolutionary education reform act in Kentucky took up much of Kentucky educators' time and efforts. AEL staff were on top of the Kentucky Education Reform Act both before and after its passage. AEL staff completed several major tasks directly related to understanding the Kentucky reform act. Second, West Virginia experienced its first statewide teacher "strike" in 1990. This work stoppage caused a lot of disruption in the schools, ink in the media, suits in the justice system, and action in the governmental offices. AEL staff were affected directly by their children not being in school during the "strike," as much as their professional contacts with clients serving or served by the schools. The special session of the West Virginia Legislature, devoted entirely to education, caused additional work for AEL staff. Third, election year changes brought a new state house administration in Virginia. In West Virginia, especially, the desire of the governor's office to be in charge of education added extra layers of contacts and politics to understand and deal with regarding the delivery of AEL's services. Fourth, the development of a lawsuit threatening the inequity in the financing of Tennessee schools kept AEL staff busy with information, syntheses, presentations, and policy requests. Fifth, we would be less than honest if we did not mention the fact that OERI's directive for changes in the final, annual, quarterly, and self-assessment reports caused major problems for AEL staff. For example, AEL's subcontract for its external evaluation with Western Michigan University had to be renegotiated and, as a result of OERI's directive, the tasks were revised and the delivery date of the external evaluation report was moved up four months. Further, hundreds of extra hours were required of staff to implement the OERI directive for the final report.

Despite all these unusual circumstances and problems for AEL staff in 1990, evidence supports the fact that staff performed their duties well. The number of client contacts increased substantially. The number of R & D products produced in 1990 increased over prior years. Client satisfaction, evaluated in more than 100 phone interviews, was very high. Users' ratings of the provision of services by staff in 1990 remained very high during 1990. Newer and expanded methods of involving educational practitioners in the development of R & D products and publications were implemented in 1990. And, finally, this final report, with its total revision and rewriting, is testimony of staff's fine performance under the difficult circumstances experienced in 1990. Overall, AEL staff should be very pleased with their performance in this unusual year.

Conclusion #4: Successes Should Not Breed Complacency: There is Room for Improvement at AEL

We conclude that there is room for improvement at AEL and that staff should not become complacent with past successes. Here we admit that AEL exhibited both strengths and weaknesses in 1990. The above copy largely describes the strengths--we will not repeat them here. Rather, in this copy, we recognize that there is room for improvement, we name those areas in need of improvement, and we implore ourselves to meet the challenges inherent in self-improvement. That is not saying that these areas for improvement call for major upheavals in management and/or operations. What is called for are adjustments and fine-tuning of present operations to effect the improvements. We are saying that, as an R & D organization, we should seek to improve our products and services in a systematic, rational, data-based manner.

First, for as much success we know we have had with our primary audiences this past year, we know much less about our impact with our secondary (or second-tier) clients. We should strive to increase the knowledge of our impact on the clients of our clients. For example, how well does our impact on teachers result in impacts on their students? Realizing that such direct outcomes of secondary clients are difficult to locate, describe, and measure should not deter us from attempting to do so.

Second, the AEL Board approved three new performance goals for the Laboratory. Therefore, staff should assess the extent to which these three new performance goals are addressed by staff, and this information should be fed back to the Board for its consideration.

Third, we should strive to improve our evaluation efforts even more. We should do more to use evaluation information and data for improved decisionmaking. There could be a tendency to accumulate much evaluation data without using it effectively in an improvement-oriented manner. Not that "bean-counting" isn't useful at all--it's a case of to what purposes and decisions are all those counts of beans put?

Fourth, we need to perform more cross-project and Labwide evaluations. With the proper evaluation tools and procedures, more cross-project and institutional-level evaluations could be performed for both the project advisory committees and the full governing Board to consider in their decisionmaking.

Fifth, we need to continue to ask evaluators outside our own agency to conduct evaluation activities of us. External evaluation activities completed by staff at Western Michigan University were very productive in 1990. We learned much from their secondary analysis of impact data. We learned even more from their intensive case study of AEL's impact in one school district. We need to continue these evaluations by a credible agency outside our Region that is respected nationally.

Sixth, we should continue to make progress in addressing our different categories of impact in the Region. The Western Michigan University pilot test of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's continuum of impact was fruitful. We should apply what we learned from that pilot test, design our own categories of impact, and test them. A field test of our set of categories of impact with operational definitions on our own data should help provide greater clarity to the evaluation data collected on our products and services. We should be able to describe our impacts more clearly and more succinctly to our various audiences. Perhaps this would address the calls for "more rich" descriptions of what we really do in our Region to help improve education.